

Book 1

Leadership Every Day

At no other time in education have we needed quality leadership more than we do today. Schools are striving to support all students to learn and meet challenging standards. This requires rethinking how schools operate, developing new roles for teachers and administrators, and changing expectations as well as behaviors.

Without supportive and proactive leadership, the increased pressure for high performance can be exhausting and demoralizing. It can encourage blaming and lead people to lose hope. With visionary and collaborative leadership, schools and the people in them feel supported as they focus on improving processes and practices and work together to achieve high performance. They can set a course for success, monitoring and celebrating milestones, and supporting one another along the way.

Quality leadership requires collaboration among many to make it work well and practice, practice, practice to get it right. With today's challenges and opportunities in education, we need many, rather than a few, people leading collaboratively and creatively every day.

The contemplations in Book One introduce leadership as a way of thinking and acting every day. They are organized by major themes, including:

- What do effective leaders do? How do they build a shared commitment to the work? What specific practices increase student achievement?
- What are the environments that support excellent leadership, such as shared leadership and professional learning communities?
- What are some of the challenges leaders face, and how can they address them?
- What are the traits of leaders, and how do they keep doing the right things?

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These topics are interwoven through the contemplations for Days 1 through 31.

DAY 1: WE ARE ALL LEADERS

A community is like a ship; everyone ought to be prepared to take the helm.

Henrik Ibsen

Are you a leader?

Have you wrestled with this question maybe once or twice in your life, or maybe more frequently? Do you eagerly take responsibility for leading others, or is it harder for you to take the helm? What does it mean to you to be a leader?

One common definition of leadership is an individual's ability to work with others to accomplish an agreed-upon result. What isn't in this definition is as important as what is. It says absolutely nothing about position, title, or status.

Everyone can demonstrate extraordinary leadership when he or she learns and uses effective practices such as those described in this book. You do not need to be an administrator to be a leader. Sometimes having an impressive job title helps to get things done, but not always. In fact, when leaders rely only on their positional power to make things happen, their coworkers or followers may be compelled to do what the leader wants, but they may not be committed to their work. Rather, it is the ability to cultivate leadership in others and build commitment to the goals of the organization that is a hallmark of a good leader. For example, the Wallace Foundation (2013) has found that school leaders "have to be (or become) leaders of learning who can develop a team delivering effective instruction" (p. 6), a process that entails five key responsibilities:

1. Shaping a vision of academic success for all students, one based on high standards
2. Creating a climate hospitable to education in order that safety, a cooperative spirit, and other foundations of fruitful interaction prevail
3. Cultivating leadership in others so that teachers and other adults assume their part in realizing the school vision

4. Improving instruction to enable teachers to teach at their best and students to learn at their utmost
5. Managing people, data, and processes to foster school improvement

Reflection

Consider how prepared you are to be an effective leader and to develop a team of co-workers who share leadership roles and responsibilities with you. Do you:

- Have a clear vision of academic success based on standards? Support others to share this vision?
- Create an environment based on trust and cooperation?
- Empower others to take on leadership responsibilities and roles?
- Provide opportunities for teachers and students to teach and learn?
- Have systems in place to manage people, data, and processes aligned with your vision?
- What are your strengths? What would you like to enhance?

DAY 2: EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP PRACTICES

If your actions inspire others to dream more, learn more, do more and become more, you are a leader.

John Quincy Adams

According to researchers Kouzes and Posner (2012), leaders who accomplish extraordinary results with others use five leadership practices. Their actions contribute to their effectiveness and the success of those with whom they work. Effective leaders intentionally and deliberately use these five leadership practices every day:

1. *Model the way.* It is no surprise that effective leaders are credible. People usually know what to expect from them. They are clear about their own personal values and views and build a consensus among others about the values that will guide all of them. Leaders “model the way” by checking to make sure their actions are consistent with their values, sending a strong message about what is important to them and their work.
2. *Inspire a shared vision.* Effective leaders care deeply about what they want to accomplish and work with their colleagues to identify common, shared goals and aspirations for the future.

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3. *Challenge the process.* Effective leaders question and work to change the status quo. They take on challenging projects that help them learn something new. They learn from their failures as well as their successes and see every day as a chance to do their job smarter and better than the day before.
4. *Enable others to act.* Leaders foster collaboration and teamwork. They share power and responsibility. They actively remove hierarchy and other roadblocks to increase interactions among people who need to work together. They coach and support others so that they have the confidence they need to succeed. They continually ask themselves, “What can I do to help this person continue to grow and be highly competent?”
5. *Encourage the heart.* Effective leaders build a strong, caring community in which people praise and recognize success. They know success breeds success and celebrate each small milestone. They support and encourage everyone when the going gets tough. (Kouzes & Posner, 2012)

Reflection

How often do you demonstrate the leadership practices described? Review the short descriptions of each, and rank order them from those you do most frequently to those you do least frequently. Reflect on the ones you practice frequently. How well are you performing these practices? What would you like to do better?

Reflect on the ones you practice infrequently. How might you use these more often? What support do you need to do that? Who can help you?

Here are some examples of behaviors related to the leadership practices. How might you incorporate these into your daily practice?

- For a week, make a list of every task you perform. About each ask yourself, “Why am I doing this? Why am I doing it this way? Can this task be eliminated or done better?”
- Establish a norm of asking everyone to share things they have done recently to enhance performance and outcomes.
- Ask staff to identify areas in the organization that need improvement. Commit to changing three of the most frequently mentioned items.
- Write down what you aspire to accomplish in your current position and why. Talk with others about their hopes and goals. Find

areas of common goals and shared aspirations that you can work on together.

- Publicize the work of your colleagues. Let others know about their accomplishments.

Think about what you say and do each day for a week. Are your actions consistent with your values? If you say you believe in creating a place where all students will succeed, are your behaviors supporting that vision? Are you setting the example you want? If there are inconsistencies, identify what you need to change (Kouzes, Posner, & Morrow, 2010).

DAY 3: MAKING CONSCIOUS CHOICES

One's philosophy is not best expressed in words; it is expressed in the choices one makes.

Eleanor Roosevelt

Choose. Choose often—hundreds of times a day, in fact.

Choose. Choose based on what you desire—what you truly want for yourself and others.

Choose. Choose deliberately and consciously. Choose, if you want to move forward. Don't choose, and you stay stationary or fall back.

One of the key characteristics of leaders is that they consciously make all kinds of choices—not just the big ones, such as instituting new policies or programs. They make medium-sized choices, such as choosing not to blame themselves for failure or not being deterred from their mission by adversaries. They also make many small choices: choosing to check in on a colleague who has a serious illness in the family or picking up the coffee cups at the end of a meeting. Each of the choices leaders make says something about what they stand for and what they want for themselves and their organizations.

As a leader in your organization, there are two choices that are essential for you to make:

1. *Choose to know what you want.* Oftentimes, people cannot move ahead because they don't know what they want. They are stagnant, often waiting for some external force to push them in a direction. Although it is not easy, you can develop a conscious habit of knowing what you want and pursuing it. Maybe you need to set up a meeting with an influential person in your community to help

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get the budget passed; perhaps you want to get small groups of staff working together to better track your results; or maybe you would rather not serve on a group or committee that you have been assigned to for years. Be clear about and consciously choose what you want. Think of yourself as always having an answer to the question, if it were posed, “What is it that you want right now? Five days from now? Five years from now?”

2. *Choose to act to achieve what you want.* How much of your time do you spend doing what you want to do to achieve your goals? How often do you feel as if you are compelled to spend time doing things that are not connected to your goals but imposed on you? Listen to your language as you talk with others. How often do you say you “have to” or “should” do something?

According to Dave Ellis (2002), this language communicates that you are living in a world of obligation—your actions are controlled by external influence, not by your own goals and desires. Ellis points out that people communicate more powerfully when they clarify what they want and speak less in terms of what they “have to” do and more in terms of what they “plan” or “promise” to do. People often don’t get what they want because they never make their wishes known to themselves and others and act on them. The sheer act of stating what you want will accomplish a great deal. Perhaps to achieve what you want, you must take a next step: set a meeting date, write a memo, or recommend a new program. Each day, try to take at least one step that moves you toward your goals.

Reflection

During the day, stop periodically to ask yourself what choices you are making and why. If you want something at that moment, what is it? Take an extra minute or two for yourself if you don’t readily have an answer to that question. Chances are that you do want something—maybe even just 5 minutes to call home or to sign a contract for a new professional development program. Once you find what it is, choose it for yourself. At the end of the day, tally what you gained for yourself and your organization by making conscious, deliberate choices.

Look over your list. How many of the items relate directly to what you are trying to accomplish? How can you do more of these things and less of the things that may not affect your goals?

DAY 4: COMMITTING TO A MORAL IMPERATIVE

Most educators inherently believe that racism is morally wrong. The challenge is to advance that moral position into real, comprehensive, cognitive, and intellectual foundations of understanding that will allow us to challenge racism in our everyday personal interactions and professional practices.

Glenn Singleton & Curtis Linton

One of the conscious choices that leaders must make is to commit to a “moral imperative.” According to Lindsey, Robins, and Terrell (2003), educators must make a “moral commitment to confronting entitlement and eliminating oppression” (p. 294). Without such a commitment, racial inequalities and achievement gaps will continue to persist within our educational system. It is imperative for leaders to confront racial inequalities, and the beliefs that underlie them, in order for the vision of all students learning and thriving to become a reality.

Glenn Singleton and Curtis Linton (2006) advocate that leaders need to have the courageous conversations about race in order to confront the actions and the beliefs that “play a primary role in students’ struggle to achieve at high levels” (p. 2). They note that three critical factors are necessary for educators to close the racial achievement gap: having the passion to directly confront the problem, enacting the educational practices that research shows are effective for students of color, and maintaining the persistence that is needed to relentlessly address inequality (pp. 6–7).

In order to enact the second factor, Singleton and Linton propose that leaders engage in courageous conversation following their “six conditions” that can guide leaders’ through racial dialogue. The six conditions include:

1. *Getting Personal*—“establishing a racial context that is personal, local, and immediate,” which entails an examination of one’s own racial attitudes, beliefs, and expectations (p. 73)
2. *Keeping the Spotlight on Race*—“isolating race while acknowledging the broader scope of diversity and the variety of factors that contribute to a racialized problem,” which means that conversations focus exclusively and intentionally on race and not, for example, on poverty, language, or gender; which are also important issues to discuss but leaders need to promote dialogue that focuses on one issue at a time (p. 88)

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3. *Engaging Multiple Racial Perspectives*—“normalizing social construction of knowledge, thus engaging multiple racial points of view in order to surface critical perspectives,” which means acknowledging that individuals bring experienced-based and unique perspectives on race to the conversation, forming a “broad continuum of willingness and ability to examine and understand racial matters” (pp. 105–106)
4. *Keeping Us All at the Table*—“monitoring the parameters of the conversation by being explicit and intentional about the number of participants, prompts for discussion, and time allotted for listening, speaking and reflecting,” which means that leaders pay attention to the elements of the conversation that promote safety and trust (pp. 117–119)
5. *What Do You Mean by “Race”?*—“establishing agreement around a contemporary working definition of race that clearly differentiates it from ethnicity and nationality,” which means consulting the literature so that everyone at the table is clear about the distinctions and definitions (p. 158)
6. *Let’s Talk About Whiteness*—“examining the presence and role of Whiteness, its impact on the conversation, and the problem being addressed,” which means acknowledging that this dominant racial group has historically shaped the definition of race (p. 181) and “subordinates other cultures” (p. 204)

Reflection

Do you have a strong commitment to confronting and addressing racial inequality and racial achievement gaps? In what ways do you act upon this moral commitment?

Do you engage your colleagues in “courageous conversations”? To what extent do you engage and encourage those in your organization to examine the racial beliefs and assumptions operating within the system?

What more might you do to ensure that your organizational culture values and routinely acts upon a moral imperative to address inequalities and discuss race?

DAY 5: USING POWER APPROPRIATELY

The key to successful leadership today is influence, not authority.

Kenneth Blanchard

What do you think of when you hear the word *power* being used in relation to people, as in “She’s a powerful woman” or “He’s got a lot of power in this organization”?

Power can be defined as having great influence and control over others. Leaders gain it through positional authority and/or by earning respect and developing a following. Regardless of how leaders gain power, they must use it appropriately and morally. If they fall in love with the idea of power, they may end up taking actions that are in the interest of retaining their power, not in meeting their mission.

Stephen Covey (1990) identified three different types of power used by leaders. When a leader uses *coercive power*, followers follow because they are afraid. They will either be punished in some way or lose something if they fail to do what the leader wants. For example, too often we see education leaders use accountability for student learning as a threat instead of as an opportunity to work together to solve problems. When a leader relies on *utility power*, followers follow because of the benefits they will receive if they comply. This model sees the leader-follower relationship as transactional—the follower will do something for some reward (for example, paycheck, bonus, or recognition). This type of power is the most commonly used in organizations. The third type—*legitimate power*—is focused on building commitment and trust. Followers follow because they believe in the leaders, trust them, and want to achieve the same purpose. This is the type of power that is the strongest and most effective.

Each type of power has different consequences. Coercive power relies on fear and works only as long as there is something to be feared. Although it is based on equity, utility power often encourages individualism rather than group efforts. Legitimate power relies on mutual respect and honor and produces a sustained, proactive response from followers.

Reflection

Pay attention to your own language. Do you often cite the consequences of noncompliance, as in “Those who fail to do this will . . .”? If so, you may be drawing too heavily on coercive power. Do you make promises, as in “Those who do this will get extra credit, a raise, a bonus . . .”? If so, you may be over relying on utility power. Pay attention to the times you may use these words and think about whether it would be more effective to build trust and commitment so that people are more personally motivated to make desired changes.

After considering these questions, ask yourself what type of power base you see yourself relying on most frequently. How do followers respond? What type of power base would you prefer to use more often? How do you think followers would respond?

DAY 6: BUILDING SHARED VISION

Few, if any, forces in human affairs are as powerful as shared vision.

Peter Senge

Vision! What is your reaction to this word?

Is it negative? Perhaps you have been involved in vision-building activities that never really made a difference in how your organization functioned or in your results. Perhaps your organization, like many others, failed to live by its vision once it was created.

Effective leaders engage people throughout the organization in building commitment toward the shared vision that becomes the guiding force for all action. A great example of this is schools that have established a vision of an unyielding commitment to ensuring that all students gain important and relevant content knowledge. The vision drives all behaviors and informs all of the school's operations, structures, and allocation of resources. Another example is schools that envision themselves as providing the best quality instruction, without exception. Again, the vision shapes what the staff does, including making sure every teacher is supported to learn and carry out best practice and use ongoing analysis of data and results to find out what is working and what needs to be changed.

Many organizations have vision and mission statements. Most visions, however, are not shared visions. They are imposed on others by the head of the organization or a group of people at the top. These visions are not effective long term because they “command compliance—not commitment” (Senge, 1990, p. 206). A shared vision is different. A shared vision incorporates individual visions, engenders commitment, and focuses energy. As Senge (1990) says, “When people truly share a vision, they are connected, bound together by a common aspiration. Shared visions derive their power from a common caring” (p. 206).

Kouzes and Posner (2012) suggest that leaders inspire people to come to a shared vision that is appropriate for them based on carefully considering how future trends will affect them and what reputable people are predicting about their business in the next 10 years. As leaders you must look at this information and identify patterns to predict how you will be affected in the future and help to build a shared vision based on that. Schools that have visions based on old trends and data from prior decades are going to be locked in the past.

Don't confuse vision and mission. Vision is knowing where you want to be or what you want to become. It includes tangibles, as well as intangibles, such as virtues and the culture that you want to surround you.

Mission is your reason for being and the work you pursue to realize your vision. Your mission guides your actions to achieve what you envision for yourself and your organization. Both are necessary, especially for leaders of organizations.

Reflection

Do the people in your organization have a common, clear, and shared vision of what you are working toward? How well does the vision drive decisions and actions? Does it permeate your organization's culture and decision making on a daily basis? Do you have a personal vision for yourself? Are you clear about your mission in life?

DAY 7: PROMOTING DIVERSITY

Recognizing the inevitable diversity within cultures is just as important as acknowledging the differences that exist between diverse cultures.

Lindsey, Roberts, & CampbellJones

Consider the following scenario: You meet a new staff member at the fall orientation. You quickly discover that this person graduated from your alma mater, has relatives in your hometown, lives two blocks away from you, and has children the same age as yours. Such similarities often facilitate a quick and immediate bond. The two of you agree to have lunch soon to get better acquainted.

Here is a different take: You meet a new staff member who was born in Peru. This person speaks fluent Spanish, is single with no children, has traveled extensively around the world, is a technology expert, and keeps two exotic birds as pets. You don't speak Spanish, are married with several children, haven't traveled outside the United States, are technology anxious, and are philosophically opposed to keeping exotic animals or birds as pets. You think that you have little in common with this person. Are you more likely to set up a lunch or walk away and meet someone else? If you are like most other human beings, you will move on to someone else. However, think for a moment how much you might learn from this person.

While it is much less challenging to be with others of one's own culture, ethnicity, socioeconomic group, or religion, interactions among people with varied backgrounds can offer the greatest learning opportunities. Leaders have a responsibility to model the value of diversity and create opportunities for everyone to associate with a variety of people, share perspectives, and promote deeper understanding.

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Leaders can promote diversity through formal team-building activities as well as informal groupings and assignments. Mix people up in learning situations and in team assignments. Set up opportunities for everyone to share their backgrounds, cultures, and what they consider as the strengths they bring to creating a diverse perspective in the organization. During staff or team meetings, ask people to speak from a particular diverse perspective. For example, have wide representation of different groups provide input to a decision you are making. Ask staff to point out when an action or a decision may not be in the best interest of all groups. Find alternatives that better serve everyone.

Reflection

How do you ensure diversity in your organization? Whom do you involve to ensure a broad perspective? How are work groups of various kinds structured? When people are free to choose, with whom do they choose to work?

What is the turnover rate in your organization? Does it differ based on race, ethnicity, or gender?

What is the racial, ethnic, and gender composition of your administrators and organizational leaders? How do they model the importance of seeking diverse involvement and building unity among all?

What more can you do to demonstrate the value of diversity?

DAY 8: LEADING FOR RESULTS

If I have seen farther than others, it is because I was standing on the shoulders of giants.

Isaac Newton

Current leaders can learn so much from the leaders that have come before them. We all benefit from knowing what has worked for other leaders and getting insight into the question, “If you can only use a few leadership practices, which ones are likely to have the greatest results?” For example, what leaders do in schools can have a significant impact (positive or negative) on student learning. In a meta-analysis of 35 years of research on school leadership, Marzano, Waters, and McNulty (2005) identified 21 principal leadership practices that enhance student achievement. They are many of the actions we discuss throughout this

book for leaders to use in general. Savvy school leaders actively seek to use these 21 approaches.

1. *Affirmation*—recognizing and celebrating school accomplishments
2. *Change Agent*—consciously challenging the status quo and considering new and better ways of doing things
3. *Contingent Rewards*—recognizing and rewarding individual accomplishments
4. *Communication*—establishing effective means for communication with and between administrators, teachers, and students
5. *Culture*—fostering shared beliefs and sense of community and cooperation
6. *Discipline*—protecting instructional time and teachers from interruptions and external distractions
7. *Flexibility*—adapting behavior to fit with specific situations
8. *Focus*—establishing clear goals and keeping attention focused on the goals
9. *Ideals/Beliefs*—possessing, sharing, and modeling well-defined beliefs about teaching and learning
10. *Input*—involving teachers in the design and implementation of decisions and policies
11. *Intellectual Stimulation*—ensuring that school staff are aware of and discussing current research and best practices
12. *Involvement in Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment*—being actively involved in helping teachers with instructional issues
13. *Knowledge of Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment*—possessing extensive knowledge about instructional practices
14. *Monitoring/Evaluating*—continually monitoring the effectiveness of the school’s practices and being aware of their impact
15. *Optimizer*—inspiring others to accomplish and implement challenging innovations
16. *Order*—establishing routines, structures, rules, and procedures for teachers and students
17. *Outreach*—ensuring compliance with district and state mandates and being an advocate with the larger community

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18. *Relationships*—being informed about personal needs of teachers and events in their lives
19. *Resources*—ensuring that teachers have the necessary materials, equipment, and professional learning opportunities
20. *Situational Awareness*—paying attention to the current and potential issues that can interfere with teaching and learning
21. *Visibility*—engaging in frequent contact with teachers and students and the larger community (Marzano, Waters, & McNulty, 2005, pp. 41–61)

Reflection

These are the effective principal leadership actions shown to best influence student learning. To what extent have you developed the capacity to use them? For those of you who are or who work with principals and school leaders, what are some ways you can increase the use of these practices that are tied to student achievement?

What gets in the way of using these research-based practices in schools?

Review the list and select three you think could have a significant impact on your own leadership. What are they? What will you need to do to learn to use them? What is your plan for making them a part of your leadership repertoire?

DAY 9: USING HABITS TO OUR ADVANTAGE

Your brain can't tell the difference between bad and good habits, and so if you have a bad one, it's always lurking there, waiting for the right cues and rewards.

Charles Duhigg

How much of our behavior is habitual? Do you think it's 10 percent, 30 percent, 40 percent, or 60 percent?

According to one study, more than 40 percent of our behavior stems from habits rather than from decisions that we make (Duhigg, 2012). And how many habits are helpful, and how many are a hindrance? Ah, that's a study to be done. But for right now, let's look at the anatomy of a habit.

According to Duhigg, from a neurological perspective a habit has three parts (1) a cue, something that triggers a craving, (2) a routine, something that is an automatic act, and (3) a reward, something that is

pleasurable. Here's an example: Driving past an ice cream store triggers a craving for an ice cream cone (cue). So you stop and order two scoops of vanilla on a sugar cone and promptly eat every bite (routine). Your craving has been satisfied, and you feel a sense of pleasure instead of the craving (reward).

So is it possible to develop new habits? According to Duhigg, one can do so “by putting together a cue, a routine and a reward, and then cultivating a craving that drives the loop” (p. 49).

What's all this got to do with leadership? Our tendency to form habits goes right into the workplace with us and influences the ways in which we behave as leaders. As you read the different contemplations in this book, you will probably find that some of the suggestions for actions are new to you and may conflict with an existing “habit.” For example, one of the effective leadership practices associated with student achievement (Day 8) is Affirmation, recognizing and celebrating school accomplishments. Perhaps you have gotten into the habit of neglecting to acknowledge others' accomplishments, in effect, developing a “bad habit.” Enhancing your leadership practices will sometimes involve consciously finding new cues, routines, and rewards to help you learn new and more effective “habits.”

Reflection

Write down five habits that you believe serve you well as a leader and five that are truly not reflective of effective leadership. What does each group have in common? How do the positive habits serve you and others well? What impact do the negative habits have on you as a leader and those with whom you work and lead? Are there any that you want to change? How will you go about identifying new cues, routines, and rewards to support the development of new habits?

DAY 10: GENERATING AND SHARING KNOWLEDGE

Knowledge can't be separated from the communities that create it, use it, and transform it. In all types of knowledge work, people require conversation, experimentation, and shared experiences. . .

Etienne Wenger

One of the critical skills for leaders is the generating and sharing of knowledge. Nowhere is that organizational value emerging more clearly than in education. Information about best practices and research on teaching and

learning abound in today's publications. Part of a leader's job is to help staff get access to and apply information so that it becomes actively used in practice.

As a leader, this means that you need to establish an environment for bringing new knowledge to your staff and encourage them to share information and knowledge with each other. By doing so, you are building on what Hargreaves and Fullan (2012) refer to as professional capital, which has three components: human, social, and decisional. *Human capital* refers to the quality of the individuals, which is complemented by *social capital*—teachers working collaboratively to make substantial improvements and problem-solve issues together. Hargreaves and Fullan have found that social capital can greatly contribute to individual human capital, since working in teams enhances the people, processes, and outcomes that result. *Decisional capital* is at the core of what the profession of teaching is all about—assessing complex situations and making decisions.

As a leader, how can you support the development of knowledge sharing and professional capital? Here are a few suggestions:

Generating knowledge from practice: Teams of teachers try out new teaching and learning strategies, and share artifacts and examples of how they worked. They document what they learned. One of our Leadership Academy participants worked with a colleague on a commercially published book that documents the use of science journals. She spread her knowledge from her own colleagues to teachers nationwide. In another project we are involved with, teachers are generating knowledge of students' misconceptions by using common assessments and comparing their student responses to the research on misconceptions. Educators also produce knowledge by conducting discrete action research projects, discovering what works, and sharing that knowledge with colleagues. The Internet and social networking sites provide a wealth of avenues for teachers to share their learning with each other.

Reading and applying research results: Teams of teachers read and discuss journal articles related to issues or problems they face. They discuss, "To what extent are the findings or issues illuminated in the research generalizable to our situation? How might we apply the research findings?"

Learning strategies and approaches from others: Educators are organizing study groups in which staff read and discuss cases, books, and other information to inform their own thinking and practice.

These organizational arrangements that bring staff together to share and create knowledge are "de-privatizing" education and contributing to increased collegial cultures and professional capital.

Reflection

Think of a meeting that you will be attending in the next couple of weeks. Is it an opportunity to share and/or generate knowledge that will inform practice in your organization? How might you design the meeting to be knowledge sharing and/or producing? Sometimes all it takes is setting aside time in the meeting for one person to bring work they are doing, share it with others, and allot time for thinking about how others might use or adapt it. Often it involves group members identifying and trying outside resources and learning how they work. Sharing this information and getting in the practice of managing your knowledge is a hallmark of effective organizations.

In what ways are you establishing a culture and structures that promote the development of professional capital? Do you tend to focus more on opportunities for human, social, or decisional capital? How could you refine your efforts to provide opportunities that merge the three components of professional capital?

DAY 11: KEEPING A CLIENT-CENTERED FOCUS

Consumers know more about what they want—and are more determined to get what they want—than ever before.

Jim Taylor

Think about a time you felt that you didn't get the service you wanted, needed, and deserved. Perhaps you had taken time off to have someone come fix an appliance, and that person didn't show up and didn't call. Maybe you had paid a bill, but the accounting department kept sending you statements. Possibly you had made arrangements with your supervisor to take a personal leave day, but he or she had forgotten and scheduled you into a meeting.

Try to remember what you were feeling. Frustration? Anger? Resentment? Now, think of just the opposite situation.

Think about a time you were treated as a valued customer. Perhaps the accounting department notified you of an overpayment. Maybe someone from your clinic called to tell you that the doctor was running late. Possibly your supervisor stopped by to make sure that you had everything you needed to get the proposal in on time.

More and more leaders in schools are finding it essential to adopt a client-centered focus and to be accountable to their students, teachers, and the larger community. In the old paradigm, if students did not have basic skills in reading and mathematics, it was their fault. After all, they had the opportunity to learn, didn't they? If that situation occurs now,

schools are more inclined to look at their own systems to determine what else can be done to ensure that the students reach the learning goals. Changing something in the system—instruction, curriculum, opportunities to learn—reflects the more positive side of accountability and model a school’s core mission to teach students, not just to “deliver” lessons.

Reflection

Here are a few key questions to ask yourself to gauge your “client centeredness.”

- Who are your primary clients or customers—both internal and external?
- What do your customers value? How do you know?
- Are you providing them with what they value?
- In what ways are you accountable to and for your clients?
- What improvements are needed?
- How do you continuously assess your clients’ satisfaction?

DAY 12: RECOGNIZING AND CELEBRATING SUCCESS

In the end people will forget what you said, forget what you did, but people will never forget how you make them feel.

Maya Angelou

In the Day 2 contemplation of this book we introduce five practices used by ordinary leaders to accomplish extraordinary results (Kouzes & Posner, 2012). One of the practices—“Encourage the heart”—often surprises people when we teach these practices in our Leadership Academy. Too often as leaders we focus on the “hard” practices of planning, visioning, and the provision of resources and forget the power and energy that comes from making people feel valued and recognized for their accomplishments.

About 20 years ago one of the authors received a note of congratulations from her then-boss. She had just led a team through a very challenging proposal submission that resulted in winning a large contract. In the note, her boss said, “Today we celebrate your work and the great team that came together to produce this project—with you, I would attempt anything.” His note conveyed such a deep sense of trust and confidence in what the team had accomplished that it fueled them to take on challenging work and achieve more success. Saying “Thank you” and “Job well done” may be the easiest thing leaders can add to their repertoire. In staff meetings, give the entire team an opportunity to share recent successes.

Post letters or notes of praise from clients or coworkers. Kouzes and Posner suggest that leaders should write three thank-you notes a day!

In one organization we worked in, we instituted a peer award that was named after a staff member who exemplified the practice of recognizing and celebrating staff contributions. Each staff member was entitled to give two of these awards per year to their colleagues (individuals or teams) for contributions and successes. The organization funded gift certificates that accompanied the awards. Staff proudly displayed these awards, and they were announced in the organization's weekly newsletter. Using these everyday leadership practices communicates that people are valued and helps to maintain the high morale needed to get challenging work done.

In education, practices such as setting data-driven goals for improvement are helping everyone see what the desired outcomes are, and by publicly sharing data and results, everyone can be clearer about when it's time for celebration! Reward hard work and results, and it will reward you—success breeds success.

Reflection

How often do you recognize, reward, thank people, and/or celebrate success in your organization? Are you careful to make sure that everyone who contributes is recognized? Do you have regular systems for peers to recognize each other? Are the goals clear so that everyone knows when you have achieved success? What one or two things can you do to increase recognition and celebration of success?

DAY 13: NETWORKING

I have seen that in any great undertaking it is not enough for a man to depend simply upon himself.

Lone Man (Isna-la-wica), Teton Sioux

What networks are you part of, and what types of relationships do you have within these networks? How can you bring these relationships to bear on issues you care about?

There is a natural human desire to work in groups and to work well together. Information of all kinds is both generated and shared through networks of all types: organizational, professional, community, religious, and family. "Working the networks" is one way that leaders exert influence, communicate vision, share information, provide support, enhance continuity, and bring about change.

One of the consistent findings from our Leadership Academy is the value educational leaders derive from in-person networking and learning from each other. They share common problems and strategies they have used. They listen to each other and share perspectives that enrich their abilities to lead in their own contexts. Change in organizations is so complex that it cannot occur without strong relationships among people making up a variety of networks, some that exist within the boundaries of an organization and some that go outside.

In recent years, social networking has exploded as a means of collaboration, communication, sharing, and developing new relationships outside the boundaries of one's organization. Professional learning networks are also a means of linking leaders and other educators, providing opportunities for online learning, and sharing with a specific focus on areas of interest to a collection of individuals.

Reflection

Which relationships provide you with diverse information and help you in your role as a leader of reform? Do you have relationships from different worlds that keep your mind open to new ideas and approaches and keep you from becoming too insular? What new relationships do you need to forge, and what networks do you need to become part of to broaden your influence? How often do you participate in an online community of learners versus in-person networking? What might be the benefits for you of exploring a wider array of options for networking?

DAY 14: EMBRACING INNOVATIVE THINKING

We have entered the Transformation Decade of 2010 to 2020, a decade of greater change than in any other decade in human history. Legacy thinking can no longer serve our purposes—and it will certainly not lead to the education system we need.

David Houle

What is innovation?

The U.S. Department of Education (2011) states that, “In education, innovations are the strategies, products, or approaches that improve significantly upon the status quo and can be taken to scale to address persistent educational challenges.” Scott Anthony (2012) writes that innovation is “something different that has impact.” Inherent in both

definitions is a focus on thinking about problems in new ways to identify solutions that achieve results. In the Day 2 contemplation of this book, we introduce five practices used by ordinary leaders to accomplish extraordinary results (Kouzes & Posner, 2012). One of the practices—“Challenge the status quo”—requires that leaders “challenge their own and others’ assumptions and encourage divergent points of view” (Schoemaker, Krupp, & Howland, 2013). Often, it is these divergent points of view that can result in the most innovative and effective solutions to problems.

Many corporations and businesses have created environments that are conducive to innovative thinking by deliberately structuring opportunities for employees and designers to think outside the box to generate novel solutions and products. Educational leaders can take many of these lessons learned from business to transform the ways in which they create similar environments and contexts within schools. For example, Susan Wojciki, an employee at Google, identifies “eight pillars of innovation” that guide Google’s investment in innovation:

1. *Have a mission that matters.* “Our mission is one that has the potential to touch many lives, and we make sure that all our employees feel connected to it and empowered to help achieve it.”
2. *Think big but start small.* “No matter how ambitious the plan, you have to roll up your sleeves and start somewhere.”
3. *Strive for continual innovation, not instant perfection.* “Our iterative process often teaches us invaluable lessons. Watching users ‘in the wild’ as they use our products is the best way to find out what works, then we can act on that feedback.”
4. *Look for ideas everywhere.* “Some of the best ideas at Google are sparked . . . when small groups of Googlers take a break on a random afternoon and start talking about things that excite them.”
5. *Share everything.* “By sharing everything, you encourage the discussion, exchange, and re-interpretation of ideas, which can lead to unexpected and innovative outcomes. We try to facilitate this by working in small, crowded teams in open cube arrangements, rather than individual offices.”
6. *Spark with imagination, fuel with data.* “What begins with intuition is fueled by insights. If you’re lucky, these reinforce one another. . . . That’s the beautiful thing about data—it can either back up your instincts or prove them totally wrong.”