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Introduction

“There are two ways of spreading light: to be the candle or the mirror that reflects it.”

—Edith Wharton

“It is essential in relationships and all tasks that we concentrate only on what is most significant and important.”

—Soren Kierkegaard

The modern world has brought many new essentials to our 21st-century way of life. What was previously not widely known or yet invented 100 years ago has now become essential. The examples are endless.

A United States passport was previously required only for travel to continents outside of North America. Current world conditions and border issues have now made a passport essential for travel even to our bordering countries of Canada and Mexico.

Paper tickets are now rare when traveling by air. What was once essential is now outmoded. E-tickets are everywhere. By checking in online and printing our own boarding pass, we can move to the front of the line for upgrades or notifications of flight cancellations. Obtaining an e-ticket and checking in online are essential to a smoother air-travel experience.

When cell phones first became available during the last part of the 20th century, they were a luxury. Now, they are essential to 21st-century life in all parts of the globe—even the most remote and least populated. Public phones and pay phones have literally disappeared. Heaven help us if our cell phones die, get lost, or are left behind. Being accessible by cell phone 24/7 has become an essential expectation in today’s world.

For many, access to a latte has become a new essential, replacing the morning cup of coffee or tea. In fact, it’s become so essential that Starbuck’s is now a point of interest (POI) on our GPS (Global Positioning System).

2 • RESULTS Coaching

Results, having always been important, have today become essential to survival. For years, small businesses have come and gone quickly for failing to achieve the needed financial results. In the last decade, schools have confronted a commendable new reality where it is no longer acceptable for some students to fail or for only a few to succeed. Our nation is committed to high quality education for all children. One might wonder how anyone would not be committed to this noble result. It becomes clear that embracing the lofty expectation depends on a specific class or a specific teacher. When my class or my school has numerous children with no parental involvement or supervision; when my class or my school has numerous children with no boundaries set at home for sleep, structure, behavior, or even drug use; when my class or school has several special-needs children who require special differentiated instruction; suddenly the word “results” goes from concern to anxiety and soon to a feeling of fear of responsibility for every child’s mastery of learning. For the first time, the leader’s job and identity is on the line, hanging on the success of every single child in less than 195 days. Is it right? Yes. Is the responsibility monumental? Yes, it is—in so many places and with so many children for so many teachers and principals. A “standardized test” has become a new essential; it has become high stakes accountability!

We celebrate Michael Fullan’s moral imperative that we must get results in our schools today, and we know that the school principal is the force and catalyst to make positive results happen. In many instances, structures and processes for getting results have not changed in years or even decades. We seem to be dealing with the same issues over and over with new names and faces as the players. And the results stay the same.

A case in point is the story of Jana, one of our clients who is a principal. The story is shared by our colleague and coach, Reba Schumacher.

I had coached Jana for several months prior to her first assignment as a school principal. I had, in fact, coached her through the process of applying for and accepting that first principal position. Things were progressing predictably during her first few months (typically known as the honeymoon stage) in her new role. Then one day in the middle of March, Jana called my home office desperate for coaching. She began by listing the conditions and issues at her campus that were keeping her awake at night, and she was unsure of the best approach for addressing her situation. She went on to say, “I would love any advice or words of wisdom you can offer.”

I asked Jana to tell me more, and she responded with a stream of frustrations beginning with, “I know great schools are made of great teams. Out of my five grade-level teams, three have positive attitudes; however, two teams do not, and those two teams are really putting a damper on the entire campus.” She went on to lament that adults were not following district and campus policies and guidelines, including violating the adult dress code, consistently arriving late for work, and allowing children free rein of the campus. She added that since adults were frequently violating the rules, students did not seem to be compelled to follow the rules either. Even though teachers were reluctant to enforce the student-behavior policy, they did expect Jana to single-handedly control student classroom behavior from the principal’s office while simultaneously increasing the campus’s crucially low adult and student attendance rates. She was now on a roll.

Without taking a breath, Jana launched into her next level of concerns, which revolved around the lack of challenging, engaged student learning and authentic assessments. She emphasized that ubiquitous and numerous worksheets and student art work created with dyed popcorn, paper streamers, and dried beans were not her idea of meaningful assessments. She mused that many of the teachers seemed hesitant to raise standards for students, fearful that it would require more work from them.

Just as suddenly as she had begun, Jana stopped, seemingly exhausted from the months of bottling her concerns. As I offered the gift of silence, waiting to see if any other concerns were coming, she pleaded tentatively, “I need your advice. Did you ever go through the same things?”

In a flash, I thought back to a day 21 years earlier as I sat with my superintendent, filling her ears with the same stories of sleepless nights and lack of teacher accountability. Because life is a series of ironies, I am now coaching Jana, who is currently the principal of the school where I began my first principalship 22 years earlier. As I reflected on her litany of concerns, I realized that in the midst of many technological and life progressions, some things in schools never change. Jana is reliving the challenges I had faced all those years ago.

What is changing is what I offer to Jana today that I did not offer even six years ago. The difference is coaching, my new essential. When she asks me for advice and words of wisdom, I offer committed listening, powerful questioning, and a space for her to create her own solutions.

The Coach Leader Mindset

THE COGNITIVE SHIFT

If you picked up this book on coaching, you are probably searching for a more influential and inspiring way to interact with others to achieve the expected high level of results for students today. As a school leader, you have perhaps functioned in a variety of capacities—mentor, advisor, supervisor, counselor, facilitator, and consultant. You might be curious about this role of coach. How does it compare to these other roles? You may be asking, “What is coaching all about?”

Roles that have been present in our business for years include the following:

- Supervisor
- Consultant
- Presenter or Teacher
- Mentor
- Advisor
- Specialist
- Counselor

Every role has the intention of helping the student, the teacher, or a staff member to more successfully function in their roles or responsibilities. Sadly, many of the terms and titles have become muddled with a wide variety of uses and purposes. While all the roles have a specific intent and purpose, there is only one role that can enhance all roles—that of the coach.

As schools today prepare students to compete in this new world that is interconnected, ever changing, and dynamic, new skills and intentions are required. We must prepare students to be thinkers who think what

Idea Generation Strategy

This idea generating process capitalizes on the idea offered in that fortune. It begins with the leader recording as many ideas as possible to accomplish the stated goal or intention. Generating multiple ideas will help you reach your goal. Remember, the concept is not to figure out the one best idea but rather to generate as many ideas as possible. Take off any censoring device you may have in place. When you hear your mind saying, “That’s insane!” or “That will never work!” or “We don’t have the resources for that,” or “I don’t know how to do that,” write down that idea anyway. Refrain from asking “how,” as it puts a lid on thinking rather than opening it up. List things you would never do and wish you had the courage to do. Think outside the box; come up with some wild and crazy ideas. At this point, the goal is not quality of ideas but quantity. Just write the first things that come to your mind.

Reflection

You have one minute. Think of at least five options that would lead you toward the attainment of your intention.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

You have one more minute. Now, think of five more.

- 6.
- 7.
- 8.
- 9.
- 10.

You have a minute and a half. Now, add some really wild and crazy ideas.

- 11.
- 12.

Language

4

THE ESSENTIAL CONNECTOR

“I know you believe you understand what you think I said, but I am not sure you realize that what you heard is not what I meant.”

—Robert McCloskey, State Department spokesman (attributed)

How R U? Y haven't I heard from U in awhile?

LOL. I've been 2 busy workin'.

OMG yes. It is time 4 a break!

Certainly, you have noticed the emergence of this new language—a hybrid of standard English that arrives on your cell phone from somewhere across the globe with the speed of lightning. It's a new way of communicating in quick, short passages that simultaneously convey meaning while connecting one person with another. For Karen to use this new shorthand language, she had to adapt in several ways. One, she had to rewire her brain about the words and symbols used to represent the thoughts and ideas she wanted to share. She had to get enough clarity about her message so that she could express it with the fewest symbols possible. And she had to rethink the tool that she previously had conceived was for the function of speaking only. Text messaging changed how she uses language to communicate with others.

Karen acknowledges this has been a slow process for her. Taught and encouraged by the younger generation in her family—who Marc Prensky (2001) calls digital natives—her son and niece were the first to send her text messages. After receiving the message, she would immediately pick up the phone, call them back, and say, “I don't know how to text.”

One particular situation stands out vividly. On a recent trip, Karen's plane was sitting on the runway when she learned that the flight would be

fulfilling their own areas of responsibility. Her concern is that the team is territorial and divisive. She often has to handle disagreements between team members. She would like the team to function more cohesively, to share in the visioning for the campus, and to develop plans and solutions that everyone can support. She is disappointed that she has been unable to get this team to function as one voice, and she worries that this divisiveness is causing dissension among staff and has the potential to cause morale problems. With the help of her coach, Camille developed and implemented a plan for action.

STEP 1: RESOLVE . . . TO CHANGE RESULTS

Resolve is the first step in the RESULTS Coaching Model. Resolve defined means “to make up your mind,” “to decide,” “to determine.” It begins with an intention to change or a shift in one’s mindset. Resolve presupposes that the leader is already aware of a behavior he would like to change, has identified his change goal, examined his competing commitments, and is ready to develop a plan for action to implement this change for accomplishment of a new result.

Resolve is not synonymous with willpower. Blumenthal (2007) reminds us that willpower might be great, but it doesn’t hold the key to success. Changing a behavior is not simply a matter of replacing an old one with a new one. In his book, *Quiet Leadership*, David Rock (2006) states that the behaviors and experiences we have had are hardwired into our brain and that it is almost impossible to deconstruct our wiring. If change were simply a matter of willpower, every individual in America would be a nonsmoker and skinny. Obviously, that is not true. People don’t change their behavior due to a lack of willpower; they change when they have a specific plan for action and then exhibit the courage to implement that plan. Rock describes it as creating new wiring or a new pathway for achieving what we want.

Resolve does, however, involve effort. Leaders have passion about their work, and they want to turn that passion into actions that promote student success. Change fosters creativity, suggests new possibilities and brings new energy. Dweck (2006) reminds us, “. . . effort is what ignites [a leader’s] ability and turns it [their passion] into accomplishment” (p. 41). Insight alone is not enough. Leaders are more willing to expend the effort and energy needed to design and promote change when they stay focused on the goal and when the plans they implement are getting the desired results for children.