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The Four Skills of a Transformational School Leader

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Change Challenge

How should leaders engage people in the complex process of cultural change? Should they be tight - assertively issuing top-down directives that mandate change? Or should they be loose – merely encouraging people to engage in the change process, but leaving participation optional? The challenge at all levels of the system is to navigate this apparent dichotomy and find the appropriate balance between tight and loose, between assertiveness and autonomy. If we know anything about change, it is that ordering people to change doesn't work, nor does leaving them alone.

DuFour, R and Fullan, M., *Cultures Built to Last: Systemic PLC at Work* (2013)

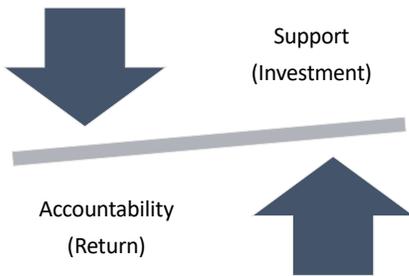
Transformational Leader

Transformational leadership is defined as a leadership approach that causes change in individuals and social systems. In its ideal form, it creates valuable and positive change in the followers with the end goal of developing leaders. Enacted in its purest form, transformational leadership enhances the motivation, morale and performance of followers through a variety of mechanisms.

-Bass (1985)

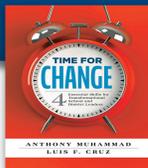
What qualities must a leader(s) possess to transform behavior and build consensus?

Healthy cultures are two-way streets.



“**Effective school leaders must develop specific skills—a balance of both assertiveness and encouraged autonomy—to engage those they lead in the change process.**”

—*Time for Change*

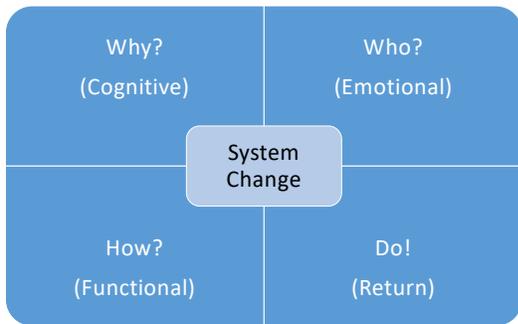


The Four Critical Behaviors

- Communication (Why? - Cognitive)
- Building Trust (Who? - Emotional)
- Support/Capacity Building (How? - Functional)
- Accountability (Do - Return)

(2019) Cruz and Muhammad, *Time For Change: 4 Essential Skills for Transformational School and District Leaders*

Rational vs. Irrational Resistance





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“In an organization, resistance to change in practice or behavior is a symptom of individual or collective needs not being met. Those needs vary from person to person and from school to school. They include cognitive (why), emotional (who), and functional (how) needs. These needs are rational; they emerge out of negative personal and professional experiences. A perceptive transformational leader knows how to diagnose and respond to rational needs without taking the resistance personally.” pg. 21

Critical Behavior #1

Communication (Why? - Cognitive)



"If people clearly understand how the tasks that leaders ask them to complete connect to their natural need to solve problems, it will motivate them and make them intensely committed to solving the problem at hand."

Pg. 34

Communicate What?

- Purpose for change (Brutal Facts/Data)

- Rationale for Proposal (Persuasion)

Data/Facts

- Identify starting point for improvement
- Stimulate commitment to a cause bigger than self
- Stimulate ownership and intrinsic commitment

Persuasion

- Context - How has this idea been helpful to others in our situation?
- Expect resistance – What arguments should I anticipate?
- Details – How will this idea be practically implemented in our environment

Critical Behavior #2

**Building Trust
(Who? – Emotional)**

Abstract Nature of Trust



“Trust is much more abstract than communication. It relies on individual experiences, involves emotion, and can evolve differently from person to person. What one person requires to establish trust may differ greatly from what another person requires”

Pg. 44

Trust (Reliable) vs. Likeable (Affable)



The most important element in effective product endorsement is trustworthiness at almost double the impact of charisma and likeability.

(Miciak & Shanklin 1994)

Emotional Intelligence

Emotional Intelligence is the ability to identify, assess, and control the emotions of oneself, of others, and of groups. It can be divided into **ability EI** and **trait EI**

The Five Factors

- Openness to Experience
- Conscientiousness
- Extraversion
- Agreeableness
- Neuroticism

Tupes and Christal, Recurrent Personality
Factors Based on Trait Ratings (1961)

Trust

- Empathy

- Credibility

Empathy

- Genuine concern

- Listening without rebuttal

- Collaborating to move forward

Credibility

- Establishing and demonstrating moral commitment
- Pursuing and demonstrating deep knowledge of the task
- Predictable and reliable implementation

Critical Behavior #3

Support/Capacity Building
(How? – Functional)

Collective Inquiry

“The search for knowledge in a PLC is a collective one. This search is ongoing and improvement is nearly impossible without it. Collective inquiry is the engine of a PLC.”

DuFour & Eaker, *Professional Learning Communities at Work* (1998), p. 64

Teacher Curriculum

- Review Critical Data
- Choose Goals (No more than four/five)
- Identify best literature/research that helps increase staff ability to meet goals
- Develop study questions that applies the research to school's current reality
- Prepare study guide for teachers and pace their curriculum for the entire school year

Learning Centers

- Use staff meetings as “learning centers”, not for announcements and trivia
- Make sure that study sessions are used to find solutions for your problems, not for complaints about the current state of your school.
- Be prepared to answer Fundamentalists
- Tie the information learned in your book studies to the vision for the school

Critical Behavior #4

Accountability (Do! – Return)

“For many educators,
accountability has
become a dirty word.”

(2004) D. Reeves, *Accountability for Learning: How Teachers and School Leaders Can Take Charge*

Accountability defined.....

The quality or state of being
accountable; an obligation or
willingness to accept
responsibility or to account for
one's action

Merriam-Webster Dictionary

What Accountability Is?

- A system to ensure effective implementation of organizational aspirations
- A necessary component of an effective organization trying to maximize human capital
- Essential in the development of a results-oriented and fair organization
- The natural result of effective support

What Accountability Isn't.....

- Compensation for lack of emotional intelligence and leadership skill
- An excuse to micro-manage
- A list of directives
- A substitute for professional development and capacity building
- A tool to silence disagreeable subordinates

RESIST Protocol

- **R**ecognize
- **E**valuate
- **S**elect
- **I**nitiate
- **S**elect
- **T**ell
