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FIVE RULES FOR ENGAGING IN CONFLICT

By Suzette Lovely, Ed.D.

We're all familiar with the advice "Choose your battles wisely." But when is the right time to stand up for something and when is the right time to stand down? It's not always easy to know. Confrontation has consequences. But so, too, does avoidance.

We can't take on every problem in the workplace. Every leader has a finite amount of social and political capital. Even when an issue is critical, strategy consultants say our reputations will suffer if we confront two issues at once.

In perusing the rule book for engagement, first consider if the consequences will be long lasting. Tiny things can create big fallout. Second, remember that words are tricky. Words don't always match what we mean. Finally, find your line of conflict. Is the situation so distressing it has to be addressed? Or is it really small potatoes in the big scheme of things? There's a line between being a good problem solver and being Debbie Downer.

Forethought leads to better communication. Kneejerk reactions create messes that take time to clean up. Before engaging in a conflict, consider five rules:

- 1. Calculate the price of winning.** Rate the importance of a problem on a scale of 1 to 10. If it's a 6 or below, it's likely not worth a confrontation. Upon reflection, winning is often not as important as it originally seemed.
- 2. Stay out if the other party is fighting just because he or she loves it.** Some people are skilled debaters. They love to argue. If the other person gets worked up no matter who he or she is speaking to, put down the gloves. If you enter the ring with a scorpion, you'll be stung.
- 3. Fight for the right reasons.** Any discussion should focus on improving an undesirable situation. If the purpose is to get "payback" or express anger, you're fighting for the wrong reason. Emotional conflicts are losing battles. Although you

might win on the immediate issue, you may lose in terms of the relationship.

- 4. Have solutions ready.** It's not a good practice to point out problems without a few solutions. Gather ideas from others in the organization before raising an issue. Leaders who are fast to critique but slow to fix can lose momentum—and respect—quickly.
- 5. Practice makes perfect.** Learning to deal with those who challenge decisions takes practice. Practice what you want to say before you say it. Talk to trusted colleagues first to get their reaction.

Understanding the motives of others as well as our own motives is essential when deciding which battles are or aren't worth fighting. Good leaders are aware of what's minor and what's fundamental to their mission. Use these tips as your starting point. And remember to breathe before you speak.

Reference:

Gallo, A. (2013, October). How to pick our battles at work. *Harvard Business Review*. Retrieved from <https://hbr.org/2013/10/how-to-pick-your-battles-at-work>

Finding the Very Best Outcome in Negotiations

By James R. Rickabaugh, Ph.D.

Negotiation is a part of life. Whenever we are dealing with a person who has interests not completely aligned with ours, we need to negotiate to find a solution both sides can accept. Sometimes negotiations are formal and highly structured; at other times, the process of negotiating is so informal that we hardly realize we are engaged in it.

For the most part, we think about the positioning and strategy that will give us as much of what we want as practical. Meanwhile, we work to meet as much or many of the other person's needs and interests as needed to secure their commitment to the outcome.

In most negotiation processes, the parties stop when an agreement with which all parties can live is reached. This behavior makes sense because the tension has been reduced,

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Monthly Theme Overview:

Some Fights Aren't Worth Winning

While winning can produce a temporary sense of euphoria, engaging in an unwinnable conflict is an exhausting proposition to sustain. This issue will guide readers in picking their battles wisely. Knowing when to call it quits and when to keep going is a leadership skill worth developing.

At northstarforprincipals.com
"Setting Boundaries"

THE FIVE W'S OF WINNING FIGHTS

The theme of this month's issue, "Some Fights Aren't Worth Winning," is clearly an important one. The trick is to decide when to fight and when to retreat. A good general knows this. How, as a principal, do you evaluate when to fight while maintaining a positive leadership status? As you walk your building every day and confront issues on all sides, the five W's of journalism—the questions journalists try to answer for every news event they cover—can provide a useful matrix in making these fight or flight decisions.

- **Who?** At the outset, "who" seems easy to resolve. Everyone should be considered equally. But that's not the reality. Some people have more gravitas, some have provided better or worse advice in the past; some you trust, some you don't; some are easier to develop working solutions with, some are more difficult; some are reasonable, some are not. Sometimes the decision hinges on who you can make your argument with, and this should be a consideration.
- **What?** What the fight is about must always be at the forefront of your thoughts. We hope that in all cases you can put student interests as the primary focus. Still, some fights are made to maintain image and prestige, the

prerogatives of the board, personal integrity, essential fairness to all, or just simple administrative efficiency. Often there will be conflicting "whats" and your role as leader will be to lower some less important issues (e.g., prestige) relative to more important ones (e.g., student welfare). Factors relating to the history and priorities of the school or community drive this issue.

- **When?** Engaging in a fight after the decision is made is a sign of weakness and comes off as whining. Engaging before the issue is "ripe" comes off as picking a fight for no good reason. Timing isn't everything, but it's important. In every fight—from boxing to the boardroom—an ill-timed blow or critical observation leaves you off balance and potentially subject to stinging counterblows and retorts.
- **Where?** "Where" is as equally critical as "when." At best, you should never fight in public. Always make an effort to deal with critical issues in a private setting with as small a group as possible. Almost without exception, a fight in a public meeting, such as a boardroom or a faculty assembly, makes both sides adopt rigid positions and engage in much posturing. Remember: In a public meeting, if you are called to

By Tweed W. Ross, Ed.D.

fight, you have the opportunity to decline the challenge by saying something along the lines of "I'd really like to discuss this with you, but this is not the time or place." It takes two to make a fight. If one occurs when you are serving as the leader, you have made a choice.

- **Why?** For each fight or disagreement, you need to satisfactorily answer why it is important to win—remembering always that a tactical retreat often leads to strategic victory. Some fights (e.g., when to have the annual Christmas party) are just not worth it. Why did this issue come up? Why is it important? Why should I invest my limited authority on this issue? Why must this issue be dealt with now? You should always be able to answer the "why" question.

With considerable experience answering the five W's, you will develop what seems like gut instinct in detecting when an issue is worth the fight and when it is not. Some attribute this instinct to situational awareness. To others, it seems a natural talent. To most, however, it comes from consciously developing the skill to decide which fights are worth winning and which are not.

Finding the Very Best Outcome in Negotiations

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commitments have been made, and, even if not everyone secured everything they wanted, the parties are willing to live with the agreement.

Yet, deciding to stop at this point in the negotiations process risks leaving the very best outcome undiscovered and unsecured. Taking one more step often can uncover the very best outcome and give everyone more of what they seek.

Rather than stopping when all parties have agreed to an arrangement or outcome, consider asking others in the negotiation and yourself one more question: "Now that we have agreement on an acceptable course of action, what else or more might we do that would make the outcome even better?" Without ask-

ing anyone to give up what they have or abandon a commitment, this question opens the possibility of looking at the situation together, even as partners, to find an even better outcome.

Try it. You may be surprised at the ideas and solutions you discover. Rather than compromising some hopes or agreeing to do something other than what you would prefer, you may discover a new option or approach that gives everyone what they really want but could not see when trying to protect their interests and accommodate the interests of others. Best of all, there is little or nothing to lose. All parties have already agreed to an acceptable arrangement. If something better is discovered, everyone wins.

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LESSONS IN COURAGE

By Michael J. Lovett, Ph.D.

After working closely with a new leader in our school district for nearly a year, I asked him about a difficult situation even though I was fairly certain of his answer.

He paused before answering and explained, “Everyone watches a new leader closely. The decisions we make and the decisions we avoid making signal what kind of leader we will be.”

I concluded that his course of action was based on deeply-held values about what is right and ethical. In the situation at hand, he was convinced that he needed to make a decision that might be unpopular.

He continued, “When you arrive in an organization, you are likely to find practices that are questionable or clearly unethical. Once you learn about these matters, you must act. If you do not, you have compromised your integrity. Those watching you will realize bringing issues to you in the future would be futile.”

What do you do when you come across an issue that challenges what you believe is the right course of action? Do you have someone to discuss the challenge with you? Most of the time, you’ll naturally go to your supervisor or a trusted colleague or mentor. However, in some cases, organizational dynamics or privacy issues place a wrenching decision clearly on your shoulders. When this happens, consider these questions:



1. Is this a matter in which you have strong feelings or justifications for your preferred decision but reasonable leaders could arrive at different conclusions?

For example, based on your experiences and reviews of educational research, you have a strong preference for a certain

curriculum over another. Do you push for your strong preference or look for a solution that honors the recommendations of others but leaves room for your view to be further vetted?

2. Is this a matter in which the safety of students is at risk and your decision could place students in harm?

If you learn that a popular longtime teacher may have committed actions which law requires be reported immediately to state authorities and the police, do you hesitate? Consider media stories of employee misconduct in which administrators failed to properly report earlier suspicions and the employee caused more harm.

3. Is this a matter of ethics or integrity wherein your decision should be based on standards of law or professional codes?

As an example, what would you do if you discovered those under your supervision are using public funds for a purpose you suspect is illegal? If you end the practice—which your predecessors have allowed—you may experience major push-back and employee morale problems.

When you encounter tough questions, take these immediate steps:

1. Compile notes on the facts you know and list questions on what additional information could influence your decision.
2. Seek advice from your supervisor, superintendent, human resources director, professional association, or legal counsel, depending on the nature of the challenge.
3. Determine a timeline by which a decision needs to be made. Whatever your decision, have the courage to face the challenge squarely.

Seven Phrases That Can Signal a Hidden Message

By James R. Rickabaugh, Ph.D.

People come to us with information for a variety of reasons. Most of these reasons are obvious and easy to grasp. Occasionally, people come to us with messages that are less clear and may hold implications that are not clearly stated. It may be they are giving us information that is their concern, but want us to believe the concern is wider spread. It may be an alert to a problem for which they do not want to take responsibility. Or it may be an admission of an error or misstep for which they do not want to be blamed or you to become upset.

Regardless of the specific incident or intent, here are seven phrases that can signal a hidden message:

- “Everyone...” Translation: “I want to broaden responsibility or boost my credibility.”
- “Naturally...” Translation: “I am about to explain actions of which you may not approve.”
- “As you probably know...” Translation: “I am about to

give you some surprising information.”

- “Incidentally...” Translation: “I want to slip in this information and hope that you don’t pay too much attention.”
- “I should probably mention...” Translation: “I want to share this information so that I can say I told you.”
- “One thing you can count on from me...” Translation: “I am about to tell you something that you may or may not be able to count on.”
- “No offense, but...” Translation: “I am about to tell you something offensive.”

Of course, we cannot and should not assume that every time these phrases are used, we are being given a hidden message. However, when we hear phrases such as these, our alert meter should be activated, especially if our experience with the person presenting them contains evidence of deflection and misdirection.



Think how you might respond to this situation.
Then compare your ideas with those provided on our website.



A BRIGHT BUT BITTER TEACHER

Tim is a bright, mid-career, social studies teacher. Most of his students love him, but he can be dismissive and caustic at times with students and other adults, especially administrators. His colleagues are friendly to him and they often see him as a leader. Joe, the principal, has heard that he once was a very positive, enthusiastic educator. He even started an innovative program to match talented students with businesses and other organizations to help them explore and make career choices. Unfortunately, the program was discontinued some years before the principal arrived following a bitter budget debate that left the program unfunded. Joe is concerned about the influence Tim often has with colleagues, especially during staff meetings. He is quick to criticize almost any new idea. As a result, it is difficult to build enthusiasm and momentum for new initiatives. Joe is even becoming reluctant to propose new ideas, fearing Tim's reaction and negative impact on his colleagues. Joe does not want to allow his leadership to be undermined, but he is not sure what to do. Find ideas the principal might use in dealing with this situation at www.northstarforprincipals.com.

Case Study: Questions to Ponder

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- What are the immediate problems?**
- What are the underlying issues?**
- How should the principal proceed?**
- What other information might be helpful?**
- How might this situation have been avoided?**



WHEN TO CONSIDER AVOIDING CONFRONTATION

By Nancy Blade

“It wasn’t that I thought I knew everything or even that I was always right. But when I became a principal, I knew that what I did was in the best interest of kids so I was always ready to defend my actions based on that. What I had to figure out over time was there are lots of paths an administrator can take when they’re ‘doing things’ in the best interest of students. Which meant I didn’t need to prepare for a battle every time an angry parent called or teachers pushed me to get what they wanted.”
– Principal of 20 years, Saddleback Valley Unified School District (CA)

Many new administrators learn the hard way when to step back from and not up to a fight. Some discover after one too many battles that left one or both parties licking their wounds with neither side scoring a win. Others get a visit from a district administrator who points out that entering the “ring” is a mistake and suggests finding a better way to come to a resolution. And sometimes, a site leader reflects and learns by watching a peer with good practices for navigating difficult situations.

Family therapist Roger S. Gil suggests that the best way to operate when choosing battles is to “remain solution-focused” (Dachis, 2013). “Don’t pick a battle or ignore a situation until you know the outcomes you’d like. Keeping your eyes on the solution can help from becoming embroiled in an emotional conflict and help avoidant people from pushing against change.” But not everyone is good at focusing on a solution when taking a stance

feels like the right course of action in the moment.

“You want to stand up for what you think is right, but you also don’t want to exacerbate a fight,” said Kathleen Kelley Reardon, author of *Persuasion in Practice* and *The Secret Handshake* (Allan, 2014). As a professor emerita of management at the University of Southern California’s Marshall School of Business, she teaches leadership communication, politics in the workplace, negotiation, and interpersonal communication. Following are her guidelines for when to consider avoiding a confrontation:

1. When there’s a low probability of winning without damaging fallout.
2. When, upon reflection, winning isn’t important.
3. When there might be a later time to address a situation in a different way and/or with different people.
4. When the other person has a way of provoking you or others in ways that make it too easy to respond emotionally.
5. When you could win on the immediate issue but lose a long-term relationship.

A middle school administrator in Placentia-Yorba Linda Unified School District (CA) agrees with Reardon’s suggestions and believes time was her teacher. “After years of getting myself in the middle of highly charged situations, I finally accepted that some fights weren’t worth winning.

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FACTS

Educational Facts from Around the World

- In most developing countries, public school is not free. The costs of books, uniforms, and teachers' salaries are borne by the students' families.
- As many as **115** million children of primary school age are not enrolled in school.
- More than **226** million children do not attend secondary school.
- Illiteracy is highest amongst females. In more than **20** developing countries, illiteracy rates amongst women exceed **70%**.
- A **10-20%** increase in women's wages is associated with each additional year of schooling.
- One in five adults in the developing world—almost **862** million people—cannot read or write.
- Only **2%** of humanitarian aid goes to education.
- The world needs two million more teachers.
- The world's poorest countries need almost four million new classrooms to accommodate those who are not in school.

Principal's Action: Next month, *Northstar* will focus on "The Grad Factor," a significant statistic of American educational progress. Certainly the authors will present a wide range of interesting data about students. In preparation, it seems useful to view a snippet of data from the overall level of education attainment around the world. This can provide both interesting comparisons and some positive feelings for principals to use about American efforts.

References:

15 facts on education in developing countries. (2014, March 6). *Academic Exchange*. Retrieved from <https://academicexchange.wordpress.com/2014/03/06/15-facts-on-education-in-developing-countries/>
 11 facts about education around the world. (2011, February 16). *Global Issues*. Retrieved from <http://globalissueslsa.blogspot.com/2011/02/11-facts-about-education-around-world.html>
 Education first: Facts and figures. (n.d.) *United Nations*. Retrieved from <http://www.un.org/en/globalissues/children/pdf/educationfirst-facts.pdf>

INTERNET SITES TO SHARE

The term "pyrrhic victory" means a victory won at too great a cost to have been worthwhile for the victor. It comes from the Greek general Pyrrhus who suffered irreplaceable losses fighting the Romans. Closer to home was Crazy Horse's defeat of General Custer at the Little Bighorn. By the following spring, Crazy Horse had surrendered to army forces at Ft. Robinson and Sitting Bull fled to Canada. For the Lakota and Cheyenne, it was the beginning of the end. Some consider it the American Indian's Last Stand. Following are some websites of famous fights that probably weren't worth it.

The 10 Most Famous Feuds in History

This collection of stories ranges from the famous American feud of the Hatfields and McCoys to a tragic sports rivalry in the Byzantine Empire. <http://www.toptenz.net/top-ten-famous-feuds-and-vendettas.php>

Top 10 Family Feuds

Nothing can be nastier than family disagreements. This *Time* listing focuses on family feuds. You can only imagine how bitter and destructive these became. http://content.time.com/time/specials/packages/article/0,28804,2089859_2089888_2089765,00.html#

Throwdown: Famous Celebrity Feuds

Reality TV has made an enterprise out of celebrity feuding that has mesmerized the public and gossip columnists. While most of these seem trivial, they may spark more interest in younger faculty and students. Certainly, they can inspire an interesting dialogue and provide analogies in trying to work through the spats that pop up in your educational environment. <http://www.bet.com/celebrities/photos/2012/04/famous-celebrity-feuds.html#!032113-celebs-kim-zolciak-kandi-burruss>

Previous Issue Resources

To access these archived resources, log in to www.northstarforprincipals.com and click on Archived Issues | February 2013 (or 2014/2015) | Resources.

February 2013

- Making Feedback Meaningful
PowerPoint presentation and activity sheet that explore how educators can make feedback meaningful to students.

February 2014

- Teaching Techniques that Increase Academic Achievement
PowerPoint presentation and activity sheet that explore practical and workable tips that we can use to increase student achievement.

February 2015

- The Teacher-Parent Partnership
PowerPoint presentation and teacher tip sheet that offer some tips on how to build relationships of trust and understanding with parents.

Ways to Focus Emotional Conversations

By James R. Rickabaugh, Ph.D.

When you find yourself in meetings with people who are highly agitated and want you to understand and act, consider these three strategies to slow the conversation, convey your interest and seriousness, and build your understanding.

- 1. Take notes on a pad, capturing key points and phrases.** Your commitment to capture what is being said sends a strong message that you are paying attention and giving weight to their words and feelings.
- 2. Occasionally, inject a clarifying question.** Your questions can help to guide the focus, clarify key points, and verify the accuracy of emotional claims and descriptions.
- 3. Periodically, comment on the emotional content of the message, such as “That sounds upsetting” or “I can see your disappointment.”** Your responses to this aspect of the message indicate that you are paying attention to more than their words and tuning in to really try to understand.

You may be surprised at how quickly these strategies can dissipate emotions and bring clarity to the facts. In the process, you will establish credibility and convey empathy, two factors that likely will be important as you move to find a solution.

WHEN TO CONSIDER AVOIDING CONFRONTATION

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I changed from believing a principal proved herself by challenging the opposition. I could better serve by setting up processes for staff, parents, and/or community members to learn about all sides of an issue. It was a big step to know in my head but also my heart that I could be true to what I believed in but lead better if I facilitated group process rather than fight an angry parent, a demanding teacher, or an unreasonable PTA.”

References:

- Dachis, A. (2013, March 11). How to choose your battles and fight for what actually matters. *Life Hacker*. Retrieved from <http://lifehacker.com/5989295/how-to-choose-your-battles-and-fight-for-what-actually-matters>
- Allan, P. (2014, October 6). Five ways to tell a battle isn't worth fighting. *Life Hacker*. Retrieved from <http://lifehacker.com/five-ways-to-tell-a-battle-isnt-worth-fighting-1643057747>

Ideas for Using *THE MASTER TEACHER Pd™ PROGRAM*

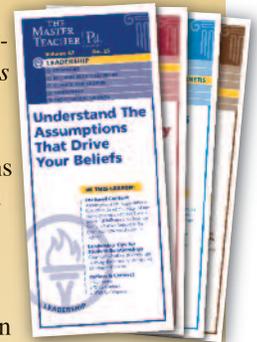
By Laura Myrah

Understand The Assumptions That Drive Your Belief (No. 25)

Principals have found THE MASTER TEACHER Pd PROGRAM valuable for integrating professional development activities into regular faculty meetings. Following is a brief description of how a principal could use the lesson titled, Understand The Assumptions That Drive Your Belief.

Part I: Before you distribute the lesson, ask the faculty to sit in groups in order to contemplate and discuss the following prompts:

1. The lesson you will read explains how assumptions drive our beliefs and actions. With that in mind, as an educator, what assumptions do you hold about students and their learning?
2. Discuss within your group how your assumptions about students and learning impact your instruction and other interactions with the students.



Part II: Distribute the lesson and allow time for faculty to read it.

Part III: Follow up with one or more of the following discussion prompts within your group of colleagues:

1. Why is it important to be cognizant of our assumptions about students and learning, including how those assumptions affect our teaching behaviors?
2. Consider your assumptions regarding making mistakes while learning. Do you tend to believe mistakes are negative or do you believe mistakes are a natural part of learning? Discuss how your assessment and feedback processes reflect your beliefs.
3. Consider the assumption that teaching is a student-driven curiosity and an interdependent process and not the transference of what you know to your students. Do you tend to be more of a “sage on the stage” or a “guide on the side” during your instruction? From whatever your starting point might be, how can you spend five percent more time serving as the “guide on the side” during lessons?

Find additional suggestions for implementing *THE MASTER TEACHER Pd PROGRAM* at www.northstarforprincipals.com.



This Month From *THE MASTER TEACHER Pd PROGRAM*:

Feature Topic*

- No. 25: Understand The Assumptions That Drive Your Belief
- No. 26: Answer The Question Every Parent Asks
- No. 27: The Seven C's For Helping Students Navigate Change
- No. 28: A Powerful Life Strategy: Forgiveness

*Each weekly lesson addresses one of the Four Pillars of Professional Learning: Leadership, Instructional Strategies, Assessment, and Professional Growth.

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NOW WE ARE (WINDOWS) 10

By Carol S. Holzberg, Ph.D.

On July 29, 2015, Microsoft debuted the Windows 10 upgrade free for a year for qualifying Windows 7 and 8 systems. Users of devices that meet upgrade requirements must first reserve their upgrade copy before the operating system will download. To place your reservation, click the Windows 10 icon in the lower right side of your computer system tray. This icon is viewable only if: 1.) your computer is running the latest version of Windows 7 or 8, 2.) your version of Windows isn't Enterprise or RT, and 3.) all prerequisite Windows updates are installed.

To verify that your computer is compatible with Windows 10, click the Microsoft Window icon in the system tray at the right of the Taskbar, then click the three-bar Setting button in the upper-left corner of the upgrade window. Next, choose Check your PC under the *Getting the upgrade* option. As Microsoft is staggering the timing of the Windows 10 release, you may not receive the software right away. You'll be placed in a waiting queue with others. When it's your turn for the upgrade, the 3 GB file will download automatically in the background through Windows update. When the download is complete, a window will pop up, notifying you that you can begin the installation process.

I'm writing this review on a five-year-old laptop, upgraded to Windows 10 from Windows 7 Pro. So far, the upgrade appears to have gone smoothly, except for incompatibility with NaturalSoft's NaturalReader 13, which crashed. NaturalSoft tech support suggests the problem is due to corrupted text-to-speech voices, but I have yet to determine which one(s). Be



forewarned that some applications and settings (such as Windows Media Center, Windows 7 desktop gadgets, OneDrive, and Windows 7 versions of Solitaire, Minesweeper, and Hearts) will not migrate from your old operating system. Microsoft does install Windows 10 versions of OneDrive, Solitaire, and Minesweeper.

Windows 10 does not come with a DVD player. If you want to view movies or TV shows on DVD, you can install the

Windows 10 version of the Microsoft DVD Player app (\$15 from the Microsoft App Store). The player is free for a limited time for qualifying PCs, but it does not play Blu-Ray discs (Vidyanjan, 2015). DVD Player installs automatically via Windows update if Windows Media Center was installed on your previous version of Windows. If you need a free open-source DVD player app, download and install VLC Media Player, which plays both regular and Blu-Ray DVD discs.

My Windows 10 experience has been very positive so far. For some people, upgrading to Windows 10 may not be as successful. I have heard of systems running very slowly after upgrading, some documents ending up as read-only, printers no longer working, and systems whose settings didn't migrate, making it necessary for users to scramble for fixes (Koo, 2015). As long as you're not experiencing blue screen crashes, there are ways to speed up performance under Windows 10.

Read more about **Windows 10, including first impressions and useful tips**, at www.northstarforprincipals.com.



Politically-Minded Thinking

By Suzette Lovely, Ed.D.

Political thinking is the mental processes that underlie political judgments and decision making. In schools, political winds can shift quickly. Political opinions produce new expectations that ultimately turn into policy. The dilemma for school leaders—who aren't politically minded by nature—is developing a political perspective without becoming polarizing or divisive.

While political strategy deals with careful planning to achieve a more advantageous position, political thinking relies on foresight and reflection to explore future possibilities. Political strategists use analysis and conventional decision making to chart their course of action.

Political thinkers, on the other hand, try to understand oppositional reasoning from a social, emotional, or economic perspective. They rely on questions rather than answers to determine a course of action. Political thinkers assume that finding common ground is easier than trying to change one's mind. Consider four ways to engage in politically-minded thinking:

1. Think ahead: When we think ahead, we use intuition and experience to make a rational analysis. We become

aware of opportunities or obstacles around the corner. Mixing knowledge with insight leads us to better decision making.

- 2. Think back:** When we think back, we pay attention to history. By comparing different versions of events and weighing multiple perspectives, it's easier to make sense of confusion. Historians think carefully, read carefully, and ask a lot of questions.
- 3. Think across:** When we think across, we envision different stakeholder responses and then decide what to do about those responses. Moves and countermoves are made to yield the best outcome for our school. Working collaboratively across boundaries and turf enables us to build alliances and a sense of community.
- 4. Think again:** When we think again, we step back from the fray to get a better perspective of what's happening and why. We question our assumptions and mentally run through several scenarios. As the environment changes, our strategies are reinvented and new habits of mind are formed.

A hassle-free way for you to provide instructional leadership on topics of immediate interest to staff.

SETTING BOUNDARIES

This month's GPS is the second in a series about developing teacher leaders. The professional development presentation and handout will help you lead teachers to:

- Recognize common doubts and worries that plague potential leaders.
- Discuss how to gain more confidence in their leadership journey.
- Learn ways to keep additional assignments in check so they don't spread themselves too thin.

Download **The Principal's GPS** at www.northstarforprincipals.com.

Did you know? There are over 50 customizable **The Principal's GPS** resources online available to you at www.northstarforprincipals.com. That's more than 25 hours of rich staff development to guide your teachers to success.

This month's GPS was adapted from our PDXPERT inservice kit titled "Understanding Teacher Leadership 2: Processes and Challenges." This title and 80 more workshops are available at www.masterteacher.com/workshops.

February Events: Ideas to Pass On

Selected Theme: Youth Leadership Month

1. Who are the youth leaders in your school? Find a way to recognize and honor these students while encouraging others to embrace leadership roles. You might highlight a youth leader when you announce the Student of the Month, or provide these students with additional responsibilities in the classroom.
2. Provide opportunities for students to volunteer in the community. Hang posters of upcoming events or fundraisers and share these options with parents. You might also recruit some teachers to start an extracurricular service learning club that focuses on making a difference in others' lives.
3. Set up leadership mentoring activities for students where they can meet with you and others from the community (business owners, city politicians, etc.) to learn about becoming leaders in their school and community.

March Events: Ideas to Pass On

Thinking Ahead and Getting Organized

1. Develop a programs/activities/special events calendar for the rest of the school year and post it in a central location.
2. Chart the activities you already know about and ask for input from your staff to make sure the calendar is complete. Remind individual teachers to write in their own special events if they will affect other people and/or available space.
3. Look ahead and get organized for any special notices, invitations, instructions, or equipment that will be needed for the upcoming events.

FOCUS EVENTS OF THE MONTH

FEBRUARY

- 1-28 Youth Leadership Month
- 7 Super Bowl 50
- 14 Valentine's Day
- 15 Presidents Day
- 17 National PTA Founders' Day

MARCH

- 1-31 Youth Art Month
- 2 NEA's Read Across America Day
www.nea.org/readacross
- 13 Daylight Saving Time Begins
- 17 St. Patrick's Day
- 20 First Day of Spring

Sell the Shave

By Tweed W. Ross, Ed.D.

King Camp Gillette (1855-1932) was the inventor of the Gillette Safety Razor. In an era when men shaved their faces infrequently, at best, due to the time-consuming process at home or in the barbershop with "cutthroat" razors, Gillette was an innovator and a pioneer. More importantly for the financial success of the Gillette Safety Razor, he was a genius in marketing. He told his people to "sell the shave, not the razor." In short, sell the benefits, not the product.

Bright Idea

The moral for principals is to sell the benefits to children, not the intricacies of the program. You'll never succeed in the classroom until kids are convinced of the benefits of the learning program (e.g., "Why do I need Algebra?"), nor will you succeed with programs until parents are convinced their child will be better off.