



Leadership Development

Anywhere, Anytime

Practical Tips for School Leaders – #16

May 27, 2020

Emotions Are Contagious

Emotions are contagious! We know the reaction to a frown, a sarcastic comment, or the tears of a weeping child. Emotions can spread through social media, email, phone calls or video meeting platforms. Negative emotions due to isolation may make us more vulnerable. How do we deliberately control the emotional state of our school stakeholders? If we are aware of the proclivity to negative emotion right now, we are able to address them. Allowing people to express their negative emotions can be cathartic and may lead to positive spirits.

Uncertainty has the potential of expanding negative emotions. Why? Human beings like to know and be able to anticipate what is ahead. Teachers and students like to know what is expected and what needs to be done to make it happen. As 2019-20 ends there are many unanswered questions for the return in the fall. People look to leaders for direction, guidance and security. How do you convey care, compassion and hope when there is so much uncertainty?

Empathy and healing are two characteristics of the Servant Leadership pyramid. Empathy, the ability to walk in another person's shoes, requires the ability to listen intently and watch for nonverbal indicators of emotions. Healing refers to emotional health or 'wholeness' of people and involves supporting them both emotionally and physically. How do you take care of yourself so you can give your best to others who are in need? What steps do you take to assure the emotional health of people in your school? Are there strategies you have implemented in your practice since March to reach out to your staff and students?

Have you considered how emotions are conveyed and communicated? As leaders how do we recognize what another person needs from us to help them perform their role? Why is it so important for us to help students find a forum for sharing their emotions?

As you say goodbye to students, faculty and staff how will you display calm and comfort in the face of so many decisions yet to be made? The emotions you display are catching and have the ability to shift fear and negative feelings into hopefulness. Positive emotions lead to more collaboration, less struggle and more productivity which yields effective learning communities. What steps have you taken to help people feel confident in the future as they leave for summer break?