

# Let it Go



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## Background Leading to this Inquiry

- I am a phase and base harmonizer. After conversations with my cohort members and other PCM supports, we concluded I am operating out of promotor. My school has committees that are tasked with carrying out specific building duties. In this case my reading league committee was planning a special Christmas book event. On the fly, I jumped into the conversation (uninvited) and essentially took over. Later, a lead teacher shared her hurt and concern in the lack of trust I showed in my team. Thus, my project was born. How could I let it go and let them?

# Purpose of This Inquiry



- The purpose of my inquiry was how much better of a leader I could be if I could learn to trust my team.



# My Wondering

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- I wonder if I let my team meet, plan, and execute special school events outside of my influence will it help strengthen our mutual trust relationship?

# My Actions



- I openly apologized to my team and even explained my self reflection. In my apology I also explained my action research project as a way to make amends.
- Together we identified the upcoming projects Grandview was preparing for and identified committees in charge and deadlines
  - ✦ Inchy Bok Worm (Reading League 4/11/2023)
  - ✦ Book Blast (Reading League 4/11/2023)
  - ✦ NWEA math data disaggregation project (5/2023 Data Team)
  - ✦ Spring family night (All committees 4/13/2023)
- Walked away, started journaling

# Data Collection



- My data collecting included journaling in all moments of this process. I wrote about how I was feeling about email updates, when plans were not carried out in a way I would have executed, and how I felt with after some time had passed after the “disappointment” in the decision making.

# My Data; Excerpt Book Blast Project



**1/17**

Received an email from Book Blast rep and immediately passed it off to the reading committee. While this fits directly into the goals we have to change the reading culture here at Grandview I sent a very neutral email. I am awaiting their determination if this is something they want to pursue. I wait...

**1/23**

Team is in. I love that they recognize these home partnerships are important to our mission.

**1/27**

The team had a Zoom call with the Book Blast representative. In the past, I would have been in on this meeting. I was emailed the date and time and explained my reasons for not attending. I will wait for an update.

**1/30**

Updated today on how the program works. I am not sure I fully understand because it is second hand information. That makes me a bit uneasy but the team is confident in how simple this will be.

# My Data; Excerpt from Inchy Book Worm



**1/9**

Team is meeting today to decide specs. They have a list of things to decide; shelving units, exterior design, placement, and titles. Hoping they choose custom and make it GV themed. I'd like titles to be a kid chosen or at least a voice. I want placement to be highly visible. We will see.

**1/12**

Disappointed. Only 2 things decided by the team. Shelving, they chose to upgrade. That's good. Exterior design, they chose standard. What about my leadership says standard?? I did follow up and with an email that said , " Am I to understand that we are ordering the standard design? She emailed back, "Yes." Deep breath and I let it go.



# My Data; Excerpt NWEA Math Data



**1/26**

I was asked about money for resources today. This made me laugh because I am notorious for this question at the administration level. Because this is a part of the equation my team has little knowledge of I did meet with my committee head to discuss the 3 options in addressing any education need; steal the wheel, buy the wheel, build the wheel. I did reach out to a friend in another district about their number routines. Shared the email (and routines) with the team.

**1/31**

Team has decided to buy the wheel. I feel good about that for multitude of reasons; time, stress of building, and what they have chosen is resource a team member has already used successfully in another district. I think this is a win for the team and the same decision I would have made. Yea, team!

# My Data; Excerpt Spring Family Night



**2/23**

Committee heads me and I was NOT invited. This is a win, right?

**2/24**

It was NOT a win. Today I received a barrage of emails of can we, do we, etc. Deep breaths. I turned most of the decision making back onto them, except one. I HATE bounce houses; disorderly, loud, and dangerous. I said no. I was asked for a meeting. Am I the only one who hates those things?

**3/3**

Met with committee head today. Talked about my position on bounce house and brainstormed replacement ideas. I was updated on shopping needs, stations, and menu.

# My Discoveries



- At the time of this Power Point none of these projects have concluded so the journey is still ongoing
- What I have noticed is the more visible the project, the more concerns I have about the decision making
- Pride is a barrier and a motivator
- The longer this project was in place I received less and less question emails but more FYI emails

# Where Am I Heading Next



- I want to continue to build decision making capacity within my team. While it presented its stressors, it was also a motivator. It is like setting the dishwasher to start and then leaving for work. Something at home is getting done while you are getting your work done. It's gratifying. Not all decisions made were the same decision I would have made. Instead of overtly giving feedback, I will create a time of staff reflection and self evaluation during staff meetings. Intrinsically raising the bar is far more authentic.

# Action Research Narrative



Like many schools, my team is divided into committees that play to a teachers strengths. Our committee that supports our reading goals, The Reading League, is charged with literacy special events, promoting literacy within the school, and recommending professional literature that supports our school goals. While having a hallway meeting this team was finalizing their details of a literacy promotion around Christmas books. Without thought, I jumped into the meeting and began expressing opinions on matters that I had not been consulted on. In the end, a lead teacher expressed her hurt and frustration that was grounded in my inability to trust my team to do their job. With this in mind, I wondered if I showed my team that I did indeed trust them to carry out tasks would it increase our trust relationship therefore positively impacting my ability to lead.

To gain insights to my wonderings I simply began with thinking about all the things that I think I have to be in charge of and this led to feeling overwhelmed. I met with the team that I had invaded their meeting and started with an apology. I also included how this moment for was a big one as it had also spurred my research for IPLI. As a team we made a list of all upcoming events on the calendar for Grandview and explained that I would be available for support and logistics but was going to approach these events with hands off.

My data collection began with journaling. I journaled in all phases of this project. I would journal my thoughts when upcoming events would get close. I wrote down my anxious ramblings as I would hear from team sporadically. I especially journaled as decisions were made that I did not agree with. The journal was my go to instead of reacting to the team. Post journaling after the conclusion of events was the most helpful as I began to see that perceived big decisions were ultimately not so big.

Those not so big decisions became decisions I could live with. As I reread my journals there were patterns in my thinking and the times I was most anxious. Events that I considered high profile while either in the community or direct school community were events that I stressed the most over. Decisions made around these events were the ones I journaled most about.

# Methods and Procedures



Upon starting this project I was doubtful that my journaling would impact my need to control all the outputs of my committee's decision making. Once the upcoming projects were identified, it was easy to begin journaling because I had instant anxiety around not being in the know. Most projects had some overlap, this caused me to process a lot of emotions quickly as I was out of multiple processes at the same time. Sometimes, this made journaling difficult to separate the feelings based on simultaneous projects.

After journaling around projects, especially those that had concluded, I noticed that I was having less random worry thoughts in journals and more I wonder thoughts about how the project was going. I recognize that projects were being considered successful by myself and the team also had decisions made around them that were not 100% what I would have chosen. This proved to myself that I could in fact not make all the decisions and still have something feel and look successful.

It seems that after reviewing my journals they all had a common theme, they ended with positive emotions around the event or task. Upon reflection, I also noted that this journal was based on my definition of success and this is where I could have given a voice to teachers. I would have liked to compared their ending thoughts with my own. In the future, I plan to present a structured time where we can come together and share dialogue around what they receive as well done and see where they want too raise the bar.

# Findings



As a result of analyzing my data, 2 things I have learned include;

- The more visible the project in the community or school community the more I stressed.
- My team has the capability of carrying out events that meet my standards without being micromanaged

# Conclusions



I was not at all surprised by the amount of negative feelings I experienced at the beginning of this exercise. Somewhere in my head, I have intertwined the idea that leadership means doing all things. I missed the class on delegation. I believe this comes from a sense of wanting to protect my teachers. I have not been out of the classroom long enough to forget all the things that a teacher does, therefore I was trying to protect their time and their mental health. Their plates are too full. The other part of me just got used to doing it all so I was fighting my own internal battle of always raising the bar. Build it bigger, better, stronger. What I am trying to teach myself is there is a time for bigger, better or stronger. We do not have to do all 3 every time. Maybe my guiding questions need to change. Is it meaningful? Did it deliver the desired product or experience without all the bells and whistles? This approach could release my one upper syndrome.

A couple of things I wish I would have added to this action research was a tally amount of emails and their topics. As I went through this project, the email chains were changing. In the beginning, there were questions that required me to either dodge the question, politely turn it back to them, or ignore. As the time passed, question emails were less and informational emails were taking their place. I think it would have been interesting to quantify this information.

In the future, I want to put into practice two processes to increase teacher voice and encourage decision making. One, before planning begins I want committees to define what success looks like for each event or task. I know what I want, but by teachers preplanning what success looks, feels, and sounds like, I think it will give teachers more confidence in making decisions. If they can see a decision moves them toward the goal, they will not need me to confirm that for them. Two, a defined time to reflect on the goal and based other conclusions, what we need to differently, if anything.