

Reflection on my first three years of administration has left me feeling that I have focused considerably more on managing the school rather than being a visionary leader. By setting my own focus as more of a visionary leader (decisions and goals are made to support school vision and mission) and less of a day-to-day manager, I know I can provide the support needed for our school to support our vision, mission, and core values.

How can I improve my leadership to help support our vision, mission, and core values?

Can reading improve my leadership development?

Reading at least one book every three weeks.

Here is the list of books I read from August 2019 through January 2020:

The MVP Machine by Ben Lindbergh and Travis Sawchik

Man's Search for Meaning by Victor Frankl

An Economist Walks Into a Brothel: And Other Unexpected Places to Understand Risk

Talking to Strangers by Malcolm Gladwell

Simon Sinek's *Infinite Game*

Max Lucado's *How Happiness Happens*

Predictably Irrational

Limitless Mind by Jo Boaler

Stories That Stick: How Storytelling Can Captivate Customers, Influence Audiences, and Transform Your Business

Scott Adams *Loserthink*

Here are the insights I shared with staff via email from reading:

Angela Duckworth - Grit

Andy Stanley - Podcast

Luck Retirement Article

Seth Godin - One Simple Trick

Vince Lombardi - Run to Daylight!

Seth Godin - Compass

Stan Lee - Best Work

Measure What Matters

Jim Hackett - User Experience

Malcolm Gladwell - Talking to Strangers

Four Seasons

Horst Schulze - Excellence Wins

Ernest Shackleton - The Endurance

Seth Godin - Break the Lecture

Freakonomics - Smoking

Dentist Office
John Bogle - Enough
Nostalgia
Max Lucado - Bringing out the Best
Jon Gordon - The Ending
Robert Iger - Sushi
Irving Zola's Parable
Predictably Irrational
Adam Grant - Originals

My goal was to read one every three weeks and share one insight connected to our core values, vision, mission, and OKRs.

I began reading books on August 1, 2019 through the end of January 2020.

Listed below are the insights I shared from August 11, 2019 through February 16, 2020:

August 11:

Grit

Angela Duckworth, from the University of Pennsylvania (teacher, psychologist, leader), studies the performance of children and adults in challenging situations (like can we predict who will thrive in the Navy Academy), always exploring the same questions: Who is successful, and why? Her research has led to one characteristic that has emerged as a significant predictor of success. It is not IQ. It is grit. Grit is passion and perseverance for long-term goals. Grit is having stamina. Grit is sticking with your future, day in and day out. Not just for the week or month, but for years. And working really hard to make that future a reality.

Her research has shown that grit is inversely tied to measures of talent. Natural talent does not make someone "gritty." Duckworth says the best idea she has heard about teaching grit in kids is a growth mindset (one of our core values). Stanford University psychologist Carol Dweck says the way we think about our abilities is key to shaping us. A fixed mindset is one that assumes a skill, ability, or attribute cannot be improved or changed in a significant way. With a fixed mindset, we avoid failure at all costs. A growth mindset regards failure not as evidence of stupidity or lack of ability but as a springboard for growth and for stretching our existing abilities. Here is our core value for growth:

Growth-People with a growth mindset stretch themselves, take risks, accept feedback, and take the long-term view. Everything is hard before it is easy. We will struggle, we

will fail, we will be knocked down; however, through this process, we will get better, and we will succeed in the end.

Here is her TED Talk on grit (6 minutes) if you want to watch it:

https://www.ted.com/talks/angela_lee_duckworth_grit_the_power_of_passion_and_persistence?language=en#t-3688

August 18:

Servants

I heard Andy Stanley (a pastor of a church in Atlanta) speak on a Podcast talking about when he had the chance to speak to President Obama after his inauguration. Stanley was invited to speak to the President and his leadership team once they took over the Presidency. He talked about being nervous and the challenge of trying to come up with a message to the most powerful man in the world. He read John Chapter 13 to Obama's team that day. He said he remembers how Obama was giving Stanley his undivided attention...hanging on every word. The part of John 13 that Stanley read is:

“3 Jesus knew that the Father had put all things under his power and that he had come from God and was returning to God; 4 so he got up from the meal, took off his outer clothing, and wrapped a towel around his waist. 5 After that, he poured water into a basin and began to wash his disciples' feet, drying them with the towel that was wrapped around him.”

Stanley told the President and his leadership team that when Jesus knew all things were under his power (the most powerful person in the world), He washed his disciples' feet...in other words, he humbled Himself and served. Stanley reminded me of how you approach your students and our school...you all are servants...thank you.

Here is the link to the podcast if you want to listen:

<http://buildingastorybrand.com/episode-122/>

August 25:

What do you need from me?

Interesting timing about the big football news this weekend with Luck. I read an interesting article this week on Dabo Swinney, head football coach of the Clemson Tigers, on his ascension to one of the top coaches in the country (2 national championships in last 3 years). Dabo's first few years were rough at Clemson. The Tigers finished 6-7 in his second full season, even losing to South Carolina (sort of like us losing to our top rival). After the South Carolina loss, Dabo was called into Terry Don Phillips's office (Athletic Director). Dabo expected to be fired. Instead Phillips asked, "What do you need from me to turn things around?"

I have been thinking about this exchange between Phillips and Dabo all week. This is a powerful and life-altering exchange between these two. This is the question we should ask each other and our students. This question, “what do you need from me to turn things around,” is our growth core value.

Growth—People with a growth mindset stretch themselves, take risks, accept feedback, and take the long-term view. Everything is hard before it is easy. We will struggle, we will fail, we will be knocked down; however, through this process we will get better, and we will succeed in the end.

September 2:

This One Simple Trick Makes Things Faster and Easier

I read this from Seth Godin this week:

Here it is, tested, effective and worthwhile:

Stop chasing shortcuts.

Personal finance, weight loss, marketing, careers, beating traffic, relationships, education—everything that matters to someone often comes with heavily promoted shortcuts as an alternative.

Fast, risk-free, effortless secrets that magically work, often at someone else’s expense. But if the shortcuts worked as promised, they wouldn’t be shortcuts, would they? They’d be the standard.

A shortcut is not an innovation. It’s not a direct path, either. Those work, but they require effort, risk and insight.

If you can’t afford the time and effort to do it right, you probably can’t afford to do it over after you realize that the shortcut was merely a trap.

After reading this, it reminded me of our core values: Worth, Safety, and Growth. All three of these take time to affirm to our kids and each other. Thanks for doing it right.

September 8:

Run to daylight! One of the more interesting reads I’ve read is a journal Vince Lombardi wrote in 1962 (week four preparation to play the Detroit Lions). During week four of the season, Lombardi shared his daily journal and schedule. Basically, we get to experience the life of an NFL coach as they prepare for game week. Side note, if we

think our schedules are sometimes brutal...NFL coaches' schedules are brutal...6 am to 11 pm daily in 1962...hear it's even worse today.

One of the things of note that Lombardi said: "What's the difference between the good coaches and the average coaches? What separates them? All coaches did basically the same thing. The difference is knowing what you want, knowing what the end is supposed to look like. If a coach doesn't know what the end is supposed to look like, he won't know it when he sees it. To this day, I see that same difference in NFL coaches. The good ones know what the end looks like." We can replace the word coaches with teachers/leaders.

Lombardi emphasized knowing what the end looks like is important. When we get to June 2020, what is the end supposed to look like for our classrooms and our school? Reading Lombardi's journal made me proud that you all know what the end is supposed to look like. We have established our vision, mission, and core values. We have aligned our OKRs (Objectives and Key Results) to support our mission and core values. Each year we will establish OKRs based off of our mission and core values.

September 15:

Compass

Read this from Seth Godin this past week:

Wouldn't it be great if we always had a map? A set of step-by-step instructions on how to get from here to there, wherever we are and wherever we wanted to go...

[Steve Pressfield](#) relates this magical story:

A Ghurka rifleman escaped from a Japanese prison in south Burma and walked six hundred miles alone through the jungles to freedom. The journey took him five months, but he never asked the way and he never lost the way. For one thing he could not speak Burmese and for another he regarded all Burmese as traitors. He used a map and when he reached India he showed it to the Intelligence officers, who wanted to know all about his odyssey. Marked in pencil were all the turns he had taken, all the roads and trail forks he has passed, all the rivers he had

*crossed. It had served him well, that map. The Intelligence officers did not find it so useful. **It was a street map of London.***

Happy endings come from an understanding of the compass, not the presence of a useful map.

If you've got the wrong map, the right compass will get you home if you know how to use it.

Where are you headed?

We are grateful to know where we are headed. Our narrative and vision, that every student has a path to a brighter future, is the compass that guides us. I'm glad we have a compass.

September 22:

Stan Lee

I have been a comic book/superheroes fan all my life. Stan Lee died last year at the age of 95. He was the co-creator of Marvel's most popular superheroes such as Spider-Man, Iron Man, Hulk, and lots more. While his creations are forever in our memories as a part of our pop culture and the entertainment industry, his personal story is even more powerful.

He was born to poor Jewish immigrants in the 1920s in New York. His life-long goal was to become a novelist. He would be an example of the American Dream... rags to riches story. Lee struggled for years in the writing and comic industry. He was about to walk away from the comic industry at the age of 39 when he was given one more chance to write a fresh, new comic. His wife encouraged him to write the comic the way he wanted to...one that he could leave the industry with a bang.

At the age of 39, in 1961, Stan Lee along with Jack Kirby created The Fantastic Four. Over the next few years, Lee created some of the most memorable characters in entertainment. What's impressive is that Lee did his best work in his 40s and 50s.

I said all that to say we all have great work in front of us...the opportunity to do great work (speak life, encourage our students, create better learning environments, write better lessons, etc). No matter how stuck you feel in your career or how old you are, don't give up. Your best work can be in front of you (Growth Core Value). It would have been easy for Stan Lee to give up. I'm glad he didn't and you aren't either.

September 29:

U2 and OKRs

You all are familiar with the rock group U2. The band had big goals from the start...megalomania. Edge was already an accomplished guitarist and Larry was a good drummer. Bono was a poor singer, and Adam could barely play the bass. U2 thought and knew they were not as good as the other rock groups out there so they knew they better be *better*. They weren't as polished or accomplished as the bands they would go see. But the band had chemistry. They thought they could take the world if they didn't destroy themselves first. All the other bands had everything, but U2 had "it."

Well, the rest is history. U2 has gone on to be one of the most successful rock bands in history. The reason I tell you this story is that Bono and his group use OKRs, objectives and key results. This is the same thing we do. The book, *Measure What Matters*, emphasizes the importance of having something to work towards, something measurable. The most successful companies in the world use OKRs (Google, Intel, RemindMe, etc.) What is powerful is the things and processes we are doing are the same things the most successful companies in the world do, even rock bands. I am proud of you. So the next time someone asks you about SHS...tell them we are sort of like the band U2. :)

October 6:

Navy Seals

I read an article this week on how Navy Seals succeed under extreme pressure. One of their greatest challenges is the underwater competency test. Instructors attack the trainees underwater by tying knots in their air tank lines, removing their face-masks, etc. Recruits were struggling with this training so the Seals brought in psychology experts to improve their success rate. The results are known as the Big Four (and it worked). Here they are:

1. **Setting goals** is critical. Small, incremental goals are important. This is what we have done with our OKRs and what you are doing in our initial meetings. I am grateful you see the value in setting goals.
2. **Mental Rehearsal:** This is also called visualization, working at something over and over until it comes naturally and so that it's easier under extreme duress. When you do enough mental rehearsal, muscle memory kicks in and you don't have to concentrate on trying to remember what you were going to say. Instead, you're freed up to focus on putting energy and passion into your performance. Thinking about how you can use Sticky Traits in your lessons is mental rehearsal.
3. Our brains can quickly take us into very unhelpful places when we're panicking. Imagine the conversation you're having with yourself when you're 15 feet underwater and your air hose is knotted in three places. But the SEALs are taught to recognize that we speak 300-1,000 words to ourselves a minute and so it's about changing the nature and tone of those words.

In high-stress situations, it's more important than ever to omit tones of panic and catastrophizing and replace them with a more focused, "let's just do what needs to be done right now" dialogue.

4. Staying calm in any tense situation is easier said than done, but I can tell you first-hand, with practice, it really is a habit you can learn.

Ford Motor Company

As most of you know, the auto industry struggled last year. I like studying how leadership teams work through challenges like these. One of my favorite leadership books is where Alan Mulally fights to save Ford during the recession years after 2008 (https://www.amazon.com/American-Icon-Mulally-Fight-Company/dp/0307886050/ref=sr_1_1?keywords=alan+mullaly&qid=1549842477&s=gateway&sr=8-1) .

Ford was back in the news recently, choosing a new CEO. This time they did not choose a CEO from the auto industry but one from the furniture industry...unprecedented. His name is Jim Hackett, CEO of Steelcase. Hackett is a devotee of an approach to product development known as design thinking, which rigorously focuses on how the user experiences a product. We don't live in the age of

the automobile, or even the age of the computer. We live in the age of user experience. If you look at history, the winners are almost always those that get their user experience right.

What is the user experience like for your students in your class? For our parents? Some good questions to consider.

October 20:

Default to Truth

Taken from *Talking to Strangers*:

Neville Chamberlain's negotiations with Hitler prior to World War 2 is regarded as one of the greatest follies of this era. Chamberlain fell under Hitler's spell. He misread Hitler's intentions and failed to warn Hitler that if he reneged on his promises there would be consequences. History has not been kind to Chamberlain.

But underneath those criticisms is a puzzle. Chamberlain met with Hitler on three different occasions. He sat with Hitler for hours. The two men talked, argued, ate together, walked around together. Chamberlain was the only Allied leader of that period to spend any significant time with Hitler. Chamberlain looked long and hard at Hitler and decided he believed him. Hitler gave Chamberlain the double handshake (reserved as a handshake of assurance). In hindsight, Chamberlain would have been better off reading *Mein Kampf* and skipping the visits with Hitler.

We believe that the information we gather from personal interactions is valuable. We default to the truth, a theory by Tim Levine. We assume people are telling the truth. Imagine a world where we don't default to truth. However, we have a hard time with truth-tellers who look suspicious and liars who look sincere.

If you get a chance to read this book, please do so. It is a fascinating look at what we should know about the people we don't know.

October 27:

Four Seasons

The Four Seasons in Las Vegas is a wonderful hotel. The reason it's wonderful is not because of the fancy beds. Any hotel can buy fancy beds. The reason the Four Seasons is a wonderful hotel is because of the people who work there. If you find

yourself walking through the halls and an employee says hello, you get a distinct feeling that they want to say hello, not that they were told to say hello. Human beings are highly attuned social creatures; we can tell the difference (our kids are even better at sensing this).

We are blessed that you are greeting our students at the door and checking on them during class. Saying hello to our kids and each other is a critical part of what makes SHS a wonderful school.

November 3:

Excellence Wins

I read Horst Schulze's book, *Excellence Wins*, a couple of months ago. Schulze is one of the founders of the famous Ritz-Carlton Hotel. It is a great book that looks at how organizations can become the best in the world. Of particular note in the book, Schulze has looked at organizations that have failed over the years. There are two warning signals of impending failure. The first warning signal is the overuse of the pronoun *they*. "They messed up." "They just don't get it." "They don't let us do such and such." The second warning signal is "that's not my job."

I am thankful you are establishing a culture of service. One of the key components of service is offering a great welcome and asking how can I help. I love how you speak life to our kids and each other.

I don't hear "they" from you or "that's not my job."

November 10:

The *Endurance*

On December 5, 1914, Ernest Shackleton (a British Explorer) and a crew of 27 men set out for the Weddell Sea on the *Endurance*. This ship and expedition, funded by the British Government and private donors, set out to cross Antarctica. The crew would never reach Antarctica. A few days out of South Georgia, the ship was destroyed by ice and sank on November 21, 1915. With three lifeboats the crew managed to make it to Elephant Island. At that point, Shackleton and five of his men journeyed 800 miles to get help.

What makes the story of the *Endurance* remarkable is not the expedition itself, it's that no one died...no stories of mutiny or people eating other people. When Shackleton was recruiting people for the expedition, he did not focus on the WHAT. He ran ads in the

London Times. Here is what the ad **did not say**: “Men needed for expedition. Minimum five years’ experience. Must know how to hoist mainsail. Come work for a fantastic captain.”

Shackleton focused on the WHY. His actual ad in the London Times ran like this: “Men wanted for hazardous journey. Small wages, bitter cold, long months of complete darkness, constant danger, safe return doubtful. Honour and recognition in case of success.” The only people who applied for the job read the ad and thought it sounded great. The people who applied were survivors. They believed what Shackleton believed.

The book that tells this story is *Endurance*. It is an inspiring story and a great perspective on leadership. Two things stand out for me in looking at the story of the *Endurance*. **One**, our mission at Scottsburg High School is our WHY. It is why we exist: *If students don’t have a plan, their future may suffer. Scottsburg High School provides our students four paths to guide them onto their future careers: Path to Business Ownership, Path to College, Path to Military, and Path to Workforce. Every student deserves a brighter future.*

Two, Shackleton did something amazing during the crew’s fight to survive. He removed choice. They were all going to make it back home. They were not given the choice of giving up. One of our key results for this year is: 95% of students in each graduating class have no Fs each semester. What would our classrooms look like if we removed the choice of failure? It is no longer an option. Like Shackleton, we say that we are all going to make it.

There is a great documentary on Netflix that recreates what the crew endured on their voyage.

November 17:

Break the Lecture

Read this from Seth Godin this weekend:

In 1805, if you listened to music, you heard it live. Every time. Today, perhaps 1% of all the music we hear is live, if that.

In 1805, if you listened to a lecture for school or work, you heard it live. Every time. Today, that’s still true.

That's crazy.

Ten years ago, Sal Khan pointed out that thanks to the internet, we should have students watching best-in-class lectures at home, after school... and doing their homework together, with teachers, during the day.

The concept of the flipped classroom appeared around ten years ago. With access to knowledge readily available (they don't need us for content), what is and will be our role with students going forward? What are the things we need to do with them when they are in our classrooms?

November 24:

Smoking (from Freakonomics)

In the late 1990s, more than 35 percent of American high-schoolers smoked cigarettes; today, that figure is less than 10 percent. That said, cigarette smoking in the U.S., as in many other countries, remains the leading cause of preventable death. The Centers for Disease Control attributes 1 of 5 American deaths to smoking. That's nearly half a million deaths per year, or 1,300 people a day. If you add up all the people who die from alcohol and illegal drugs and car accidents and suicide and murder — those are still outnumbered by smoking deaths. How can this be? How can something so demonstrably dangerous be voluntarily consumed by so many people? In a word, nicotine, the stimulant found in the leaf of the tobacco plant.

It is interesting how vaping has developed so quickly in our culture. The Juul e-cigarette is sleek and minimalist and it comes in flavors including mango, cucumber, and mint. By 2017, Juul was the U.S. leader in market share, selling one of every three e-cigarettes. By the end of 2018, the company was valued at \$38 billion, and it sold off a 35 percent stake to Altria, the tobacco giant previously known as Phillip Morris. Why has Juul become so much more popular than its rivals?

Juul has a very different nicotine formulation that makes it much more addictive. It's nicotine salt. It's absorbed much more rapidly into the bloodstream. And because of that, it simulates the pattern that you get with a real cigarette. And that is what makes Juuling so addictive.

Vaping usage in the U.S. today is **highest** among people aged 18 to 24. Again, keep in mind that e-cigarettes only came into existence 12 years ago. Roughly **20 percent** of high-schoolers now vape regularly — more than double the share that smoke cigarettes. This means that a lot of them didn't smoke before e-cigarettes came along.

Great Britain does not have the same problem with vaping as we do in the United States. Great Britain regulated e-cigarettes from the beginning to limit the amount of nicotine in them--max 20 milligrams per milliliter of nicotine in your e-liquids. In the U.S., there's no limit at all. So Juul comes along, they put 54 milligrams per milliliter in their product, and it's no surprise that kids are getting addicted. People may not realize this, but there is Juul in the U.K., but they don't have a youth Juuling problem. And the reason for that is you don't have Juul at 54 milligrams per milliliter, you have Juul at 17 milligrams. So, Juuls in the United States has triple the amount of nicotine as the ones in Great Britain.

If you would like more information, here is a link to the podcast or the transcript if you prefer to read it:

<http://freakonomics.com/podcast/vaping-nicotine/>

December 1:

Dentist Office

I read the following this week...it reminded me of our journey and the drips we are making:

"There's nothing in the dentist's office that was there fifty years ago. Every device, every compound, every technique has been changed.

Bit by bit. Involving thousands of people and organizations. Improvements large and small (mostly small), in every corner.

And every one of those improvements was met with resistance. Every change was fought, tooth(!) and nail. Every one had critics and skeptics and hold outs.

That's how the world changes. By drips. Persistent, generous, tiny drips."

We will look at incremental changes (the 1% rule) on Thursday during our faculty meeting.

Enough

John Bogle, the founder of Vanguard, shares a life lesson:

"At a party given by a billionaire on Shelter Island, the late Kurt Vonnegut informs his pal, the author Joseph Heller, that their host, a hedge fund manager, had made more money in a single day than Heller had earned from his wildly popular novel *Catch 22* over its whole history.

"Heller responded, 'Yes, but I have something he will never have ... Enough.'"

Much like the Olympic athletes we learned about (silver medalists), a reference point is important.

December 8:

Nostalgia

I read an interesting article in the Wall Street Journal in regards to nostalgia. The Meredith Corp. bought Time Magazine, Sports Illustrated, Fortune, and Money in 2017. These magazines have been a prestigious brand and have a rich history. After the purchase, Meredith Corp discovered that these brands are problematic. They depend on news content that is easily found elsewhere and for free. Meredith Corp. didn't see a way out of the downward trajectory and have placed them all for sale. To the World War II Generation, the Boomers, Generation X, these magazines meant something and had value.

This makes me wonder...what do we hang onto in education that has nostalgia for us, but no value to our students...or even our millennial and Generation Z parents. With the transformation (growth) of our schools, what are we hanging onto? Your thoughts?

Committed to Bringing out the Best (Taken from *How Happiness Happens* by Max Lucado):

For decades, Andrea Mosconi has gone into the violin museum in Cremona, Italy where he plays all the violins in the museum six days a week. Left untouched, untuned, unstrucked, the instruments will lose their vibrancy. Mosconi's job is to play them, to play beautiful music, to make sure the most valuable instruments felt the tenderest care. He removes each instrument from its glass enclosure and plays them for six or seven minutes each. These are violins built by the master, Antonio Stradivari.

We have something in common with Mosconi. We don't step into a museum with the most expensive violins in the world. Our assignment is far more important. We have a chance to bring out the best in people. The people around us (at home and school) are finely tuned instruments created with a purpose. They are uniquely shaped and destined to bring one-of-a-kind music into the world. All the people need around us is a Mosconi, a skilled curator committed to bringing out the best in them.

Thank you for speaking life and encouraging one another and our students.

December 15:

If you could live your life again, what would you do differently

I read an interesting study by Jon Gordon who interviewed 95 year olds asking them: “If you could live your life again, what would you do differently?” Gordon’s research was on longevity and regret.

Three recurring themes emerged: reflecting more, risking more, and leaving a legacy.

Reflecting more - Each day we have a chance to grow, learn, and prosper. Are your thoughts stemming from a place of love and abundance or lack and fear?

Risking more - If the notion of failure was not an option, what would you pursue? Let go of the past. Life is too short to not go for it.

Leaving a legacy - How do we want to be remembered? Legacy is about your daily living and how people feel after leaving your presence. In our quietest moments, we all want to be accepted, appreciated, valued, seen, loved and heard.

What are your thoughts on this research? How does it apply to our lives? Our classrooms? Our core values?

January 5:

Sushi

Our mission at Scottsburg High School is the following:

If students don’t have a plan, their future may suffer. Scottsburg High School provides our students four paths to guide them onto their future careers: Path to Business Ownership, Path to College, Path to Military, and Path to Workforce. Every student deserves a brighter future.

We have three core values that guide who we are: Worth, Safety, and Growth.

Focusing on the Growth mindset we believe:

People with a growth mindset stretch themselves, take risks, accept feedback, and take the long-term view. Everything is hard before it is easy. We will struggle, we will fail,

we will be knocked down; however, through this process, we will get better, and we will succeed in the end. I read something over the break from Robert Iger (CEO of Disney) that reminded me of our pursuit of growth. Iger refers to it as the *relentless pursuit of perfection*. With this perspective, we refuse to accept mediocrity. Good enough is never good enough. Vince Lombardi said that on the way to perfection we would find excellence.

There is a master sushi chef from Tokyo named Jiro Ono. Ono's restaurant in Japan is one of the most sought out reservations in the world. Ono is in his 80s and is still working on perfecting his art of making sushi. He is the living embodiment of the Japanese word **shokunin**, which is "the endless pursuit of perfection for some good." To give you some perspective, Ono insists that his sushi is served on rice that is at body temperature. If the meal takes too long and the rice drops below 98.6 degrees, Ono sees this as unacceptable. There is a documentary on Jiro Ono called *Jiro Dreams of Sushi* if you are interested.

This reminds me of the personal pride you all take with your students and learning, the basic instinct to get better and the work ethic to follow through.

January 12:

Irving Zola's Parable

"You and a friend are having a picnic by the side of a river. Suddenly you hear a shout from the direction of the water—a child is drowning. Without thinking, you both dive in, grab the child, and swim to shore. Before you can recover, you hear another child cry for help. You and your friend jump back in the river to rescue her as well. Then another struggling child drifts into sight. . . and another. . . and another. The two of you can barely keep up. Suddenly, you see your friend wading out of the water, seeming to leave you alone. 'Where are you going?' you demand. Your friend answers, 'I'm going upstream to tackle the guy who's throwing all these kids in the water.'"

How do we avoid the cycle of response, avoid constantly putting out fires and/or emergencies? Staying downstream doesn't put us in a position to move upstream to fix the systems that caused the problems. For example, we know that $\frac{2}{3}$ of our discipline infractions come from boys who come from low socioeconomic status. What are some things we can do upstream to help prevent this? Remember, big problems are rarely

solved with big solutions. Small, incremental changes are powerful. What are you facing in your classroom that is a downstream response that we can work on fixing upstream? How can we begin to shift our focus upstream? Dan Heath has a book coming out on Zola's Parable in March...can't wait to read it.

January 19:

I read this from *Predictably Irrational*:

In 210 BC, a Chinese commander named Xiang Yu led his troops across the Yangtze River to attack the army of the Qin (Chin) Dynasty. Pausing on the banks of the river for the night, his troops awakened in the morning to find, to their horror, that their ships were burning. They hurried to their feet to fight off their attackers but soon discovered that it was Xian Yu himself who had set their ships on fire and that he had also ordered all the cooking pots crushed.

Xiang Yu explained to his troops that without the pots and ships, they had no other choice but to fight their way to victory or perish (Remember the story I share about Shackleton and *The Endurance* Expedition). That did not earn Xiang Yu a place on the Chinese's list of favorite commanders, but it did have a tremendous effect on his troops; grabbing their lances and bows, they charged ferociously against the enemy and won nine consecutive battles, completely obliterating the main-force units of the Qin Dynasty.

This story is interesting against the norms of human behavior...we struggle with the idea of closing the doors on our alternatives. The idea of losing and ships (possible escape) and pots (how we going to eat) is ludicrous to most. In running back and forth among things that might be important, we forget to spend enough time on what really is important.

January 26:

Originals

In Adam Grant's book, *Originals: How Non-Conformists Move the World*, he shows that we have long valued the rule-following, memorizing students. He notes that the students the US often regard as "prodigies" - the ones who learn to read at age two, play Bach at four, breeze through calculus at six - rarely go on to change the world. When scholars study the most influential people in history, they are rarely regarded as "gifted" or "geniuses" in their childhood. Those who go on to change the world are

creative and flexible thinkers, people who think outside rather than inside the box.
(growth mindset)

Malcolm Gladwell studies this in his book *Outliers* (great book if you haven't read it). Gladwell indicates that analytical intelligence, such as IQ, is an innate skill mostly attributed to our genes. However, practical intelligence is learned **(growth mindset...we can get better)**. What is practical intelligence? Robert Sternberg, a psychologist, says that it includes, "knowing what to say to whom, knowing when to say it, and knowing how to say it for maximum effect." Gladwell indicated that it is, "knowledge that helps you read situations correctly to get what you want."

February 2

Disneyland and Stealth Fighters

I am reading a book on how the F117 and B-2 Stealth Fighters and Bombers began development in the 1960s and 1970s. They made their noted combat debut during the first Iraqi Conflict when we liberated Kuwait. The book not only looks at the development but how leadership brought this to fruition. Some interesting information...the engineers that designed the rides for Disneyland's Saucers for Tomorrowland, Dumbo's Flying Elephants, and the Matterhorn were the same engineers that designed the F117 Stealth and the B-2 Stealth. The engineers thought that if they could make Dumbo fly...they could surely build Stealth Fighters.

This made me think of the four Paths we offer...wondering what great things our kids will do someday. Let's encourage them and Speak Life.

February 9

How the San Francisco 49ers Stopped Being Losers (well except for last week)

Listened to an interesting podcast on how the 49ers organization went from being one of the best in the 1980s and 90s to one of the worst in recent years. They hit rock bottom in 2017. The podcast looks at what they did to become better (growth mindset). One of the parts that stood out is when they said all 11 guys on the field have a specific job to do. When one person does not do their job, it affects everyone.

I appreciate that you are all committed to doing your job (supporting our mission, core values, and OKRs). Everyone on our campus is one of the "11 guys" on the field. You are appreciated.

Here is the link to the podcast and text:

<http://freakonomics.com/podcast/sports-ep-2-update/>

February 16

The Effect of Expectations (taken from Predictably Irrational)

When we believe beforehand that something will be good, therefore, it generally will be good. And when we think it will be bad, it will be bad. Imagine you need to hire a caterer for your daughter's wedding. Josephine's Catering boasts about its "delicious Asian-style ginger chicken" and its "flavorful Greek salad with kalamata olives and feta cheese." Another caterer, Culinary Sensations, offers a "succulent organic breast of chicken roasted to perfection and drizzled with a merlot demi-glace, resting in a bed of herbed Israeli couscous" and a "melange of the freshest Roma cherry tomatoes and crisp field greens, paired with a warm circle of chevre in a fruity raspberry vinaigrette"

Although there is no way to know if Culinary Sensations' food is any better than Josephine's, the sheer depth of the description may lead us to expect greater things from the simple tomato and goat cheese salad. This increases the chances that we (and our guests, if we give them the description of the dish) will rave over it. By changing our expectations, we can influence the taste with this pre-knowledge.

Expectations are powerful and useful.

What are the expectations you have each day you come to school? What are the expectations for our classrooms? Does the way we describe our content, our assignments have an effect on our kids? Does the way we describe an advisory activity affect how our kids receive it? If we talk negatively about standardized tests, what are the expectations? These are some questions I am thinking about after reading this part on expectations and the effect on our beliefs.

Improve Leadership with Reading

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Background Leading to this Inquiry

- Growth Mindset
- Develop leadership to improve Vision, Mission, Core Values, and OKRs

Purpose of This Inquiry

- Reflecting on my first three years of administration has left me feeling that I have focused considerably more on managing the school rather than being a visionary leader. By setting my own focus as more of a visionary leader (decisions and goals are made to support school vision and mission) and less of a day-to-day manager, I know I can provide the support needed for our school to support our vision, mission, and core values.

My Wondering

- How can I improve my leadership to help support our vision, mission, and core values?
- Can reading improve my leadership development?

My Actions

- Reading at least one book every three weeks, in addition articles and the WSJ.

Data Collection

- -Tracking books - Goal is read one book every three weeks.
- -One insight shared weekly with staff in weekly staff email.
- -Meet with all teaching staff for beginning, mid-year, and year-end meeting.
- -in PD settings with staff.

My Data

- https://docs.google.com/document/d/15gkw_oxT8hw-gsAKDUeYryLPUvIxs8ZfuQL98TYIju8/edit?usp=sharing
- 24 emails sent with insights to staff.

My Discoveries

- I can get better.
- Looking outside of education for guidance has provided new perspectives on leadership.
- If I ask my staff and students to have a growth mindset, I will too.

Where Am I Heading Next

- I will continue to develop myself through reading and add podcasts to support the development leadership to improve Vision, Mission, Core Values, and OKRs

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