

# Refueling Myself To Reach Maximum Leadership Capacity

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# Background Leading To My Inquiry:

- ◆ Due to unforeseen circumstances, my 3<sup>rd</sup> grade team consisted of long-term substitute teachers (one was a retired teacher and the other had no teaching background) for an entire semester this year. One of my teachers resigned the day before students were to start school. The other 3<sup>rd</sup> grade teacher left for maternity leave 3 weeks into the school year and still has not returned due to health issues with her baby. The instructional coach and myself were completing all of the lesson planning, grading and entering of grades, parent/teacher conferences and material preparation on top of our own daily jobs until the end of the first semester. We also supported in parent communication throughout the semester. A permanent hire, brand new to teaching, started in one classroom at the start of second semester, but we are supporting a student teacher/long term substitute teacher in the other classroom until the end of the school year.
- ◆ With our district's SEL focus, each school has an environmental team (E-Team) working to implement school-wide expectations using the PBIS framework with restorative practices. My school's team had some members who were holding us back from moving forward due to mindset and disbelief of this work. Unnecessary attacks on the E-Teams coach were made during meetings which led to tears and setback. Negativity was affecting outcomes. All of this change in our team members and team itself, led me to hold difficult conversations that led to the toxic members leaving our environmental team and then one of them resigning from the school at the end of the semester and spreading rumors about me and my lack of support.
- ◆ On top of these two large ongoing additions to my leadership responsibilities, it has been a difficult year with parents and students overall. Students seem to lack respect; parents are not as supportive as years past and it is a year of high anxiety for staff and students. As the administrator, I take on the staffs work and personal well-being as I care about each and every one of them. Many have personal hardships that are tearing at them and they are doing their best to hold it together at school. I do my best to support them both with school and their personal issues by checking in on them and letting them know I am there to listen.

# Purpose Of My Inquiry:

- ◆ I have noticed that my fuel tank is empty almost every day this year. It is hard for me to refuel for the next day or even the next week as I am overloaded and exhausted. If I am drained and not showing positivity and being energetic and excited each day for my staff and students, then I am not modeling for them what I need them to do each day. I need to find a way to refuel daily, so I feel rejuvenated and ready to go at the start of each day!
- ◆ Using my PCM Leadership Profile and being cognizant of my first- and second-degree distress behaviors, I will focus on making sure my PHASE motivational needs are met each day first, then my base needs. If I am honest with myself, I am good at meeting my base motivational needs, but not my phase motivational needs.

# MY WONDERING....

- ◆ How do I commit to meeting my phase and base motivational needs positively each week so that I can be a strong leader for my school?

# My Actions:

## REFLECTION:

- It is my responsibility to problem-solve and make everything better. With this, I am always dealing with situations or issues that are broken.....
  - I have forgotten to stop and look for the positives (small moments) and take time to celebrate them!
  - I am not using my strengths to the best of my ability; I need to change this!

## DATA COLLECTION:

- Journaling of how I feel when I provide support to staff.
- Calendar of January, February and March sharing acknowledgements and/or compliments I receive from staff members.

# DATA: Calendar of Accomplishments/ Compliments by Staff

January 2022							
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	
						1	
	2	3	4	5	6 Taylor - Thanked me for idea of math rotation procedures → students did great w/ it!	7 Jen - Appreciative of MTSS support of both behavior + academic ideas plus help w/ 1st gr. contact tracing - 41 kids	8
	9	10	11	12 Autumn - sent me e-mail response saying its the best e-mail she's received ever → I offered to buy things for her room	13 Taylor + Sydney - Both thanked me for supportive text saying it was much needed	14 Beth - shared it was nice to see her 4th groups, thank you! And thanked me for always having a minute to listen to her	15 Cherri - Thanked me for EVERYTHING (Costa Rica, moving science days, understand)
	16 Jayla Sydney, Taylor - e-mails thanking me for offering to buy things for their rooms	17 3rd gr. - ideas & support for Thurs. + Fri. Science Days since Instr. coach out ill	18	19 2nd + 3rd - helping to find some needed supplies for science days	20 Food Service Manager - sent me an e-mail thanking me for the card gift + I gave her (though times w/ her husband's health)	21	22
	23 Personalized Note <sup>24</sup> - Andrew, showing to his friends, read to office - Erika - Barbara - Jamie	24	25 Sarah C - Thank me for note/ chocolate	26	27	28	29
	30	31					

# DATA: Calendar of Accomplishments/ Compliments by Staff

February 2022

Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1	2	3	4	5
	6	7	8	9	10
	13	14	15	16	17
	20	21	22	23	24
	27	28			

Handwritten notes in the calendar cells:

- Feb 1 (Tue):** Sydney H. - placed letter in my office w/ thank you for supplies & support
- Feb 6 (Mon):** Brian Leitch impressed w/ our locker rooms, closets & cleanliness @ our CPE meeting, building tour
- Feb 9 (Thu):** 4th gr. data meeting - strongest grade/teachers
  - If could stay together, offered to help, support, mentor others → Thanked me for listening
- Feb 15 (Wed):** Presented @ board meeting; able to brag about teacher Mentors/mentees - board was impressed
- Feb 17 (Fri):** Art teacher - Responded on Evaluation Tool that she really liked my idea of having a student Model + video to use it!
- Feb 18 (Sat):** PD Day → released them early to work in rooms; they were thankful
- Feb 20 (Mon):** NO School
- Feb 21 (Tue):** Set up/got parent w/ meeting who has absided teacher all year
  - discussed his progress, concerns & possible retention
- Feb 23 (Thu):** Smooth night of PIT Conf.
- Feb 27 (Mon):** Helped 3rd grade classes w/ practice IREAD-3 tests; both new to testing & thankful

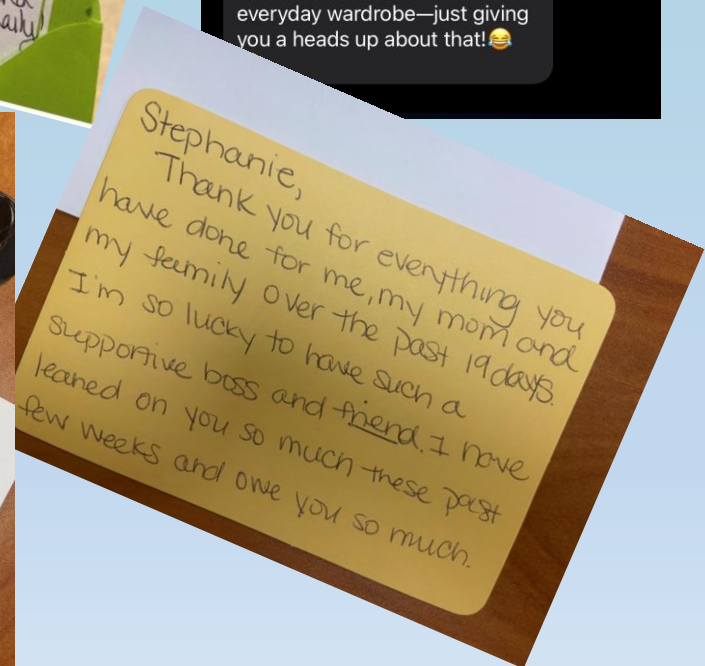
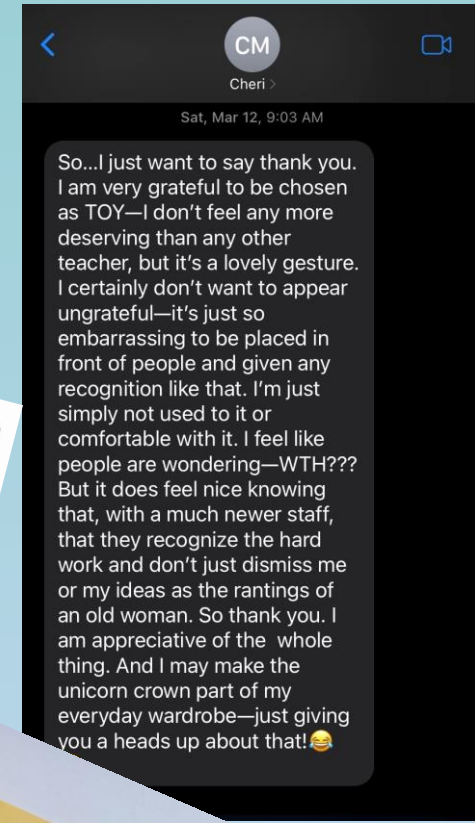
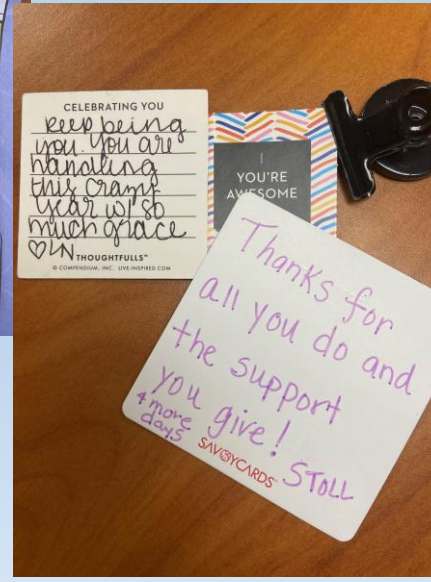
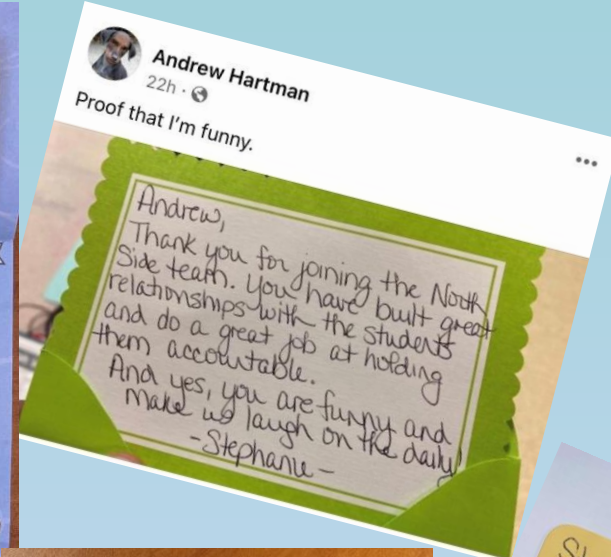
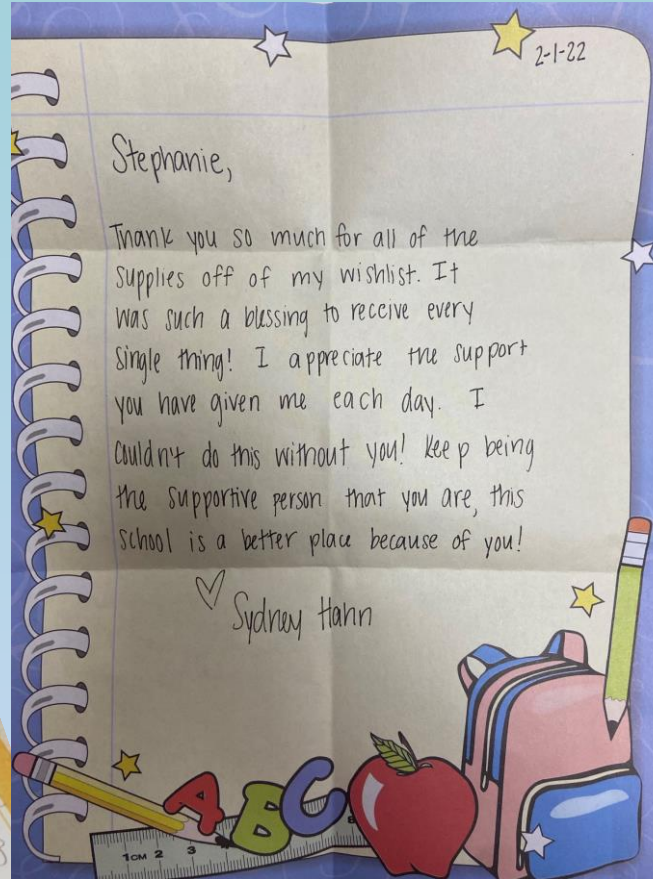
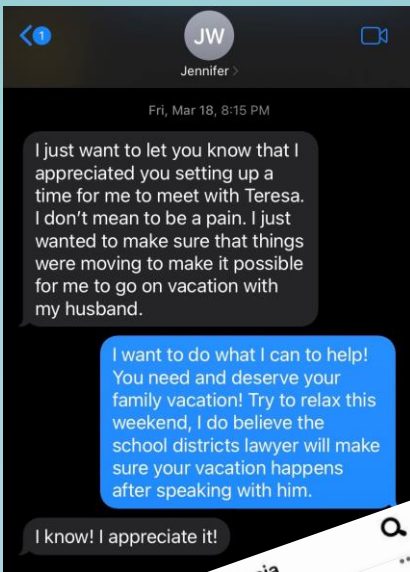
print-a-calendar.com

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			1 Parents thanked me for a great Cookies-n-Canvas opportunity w/ their child.	2 Many parents + family members said thank you for allowing them to come into read with students	3	4
		6	7	8	9	10
	Changed IA schedule to provide more support to 1st gr. + solve other conflicts - a few thanked me	6 Able to oversee and solve all IREAD-3 issues so testing could run smooth, teachers and district coordinator were grateful.	7	8	9	10 Our school teacher of the year thanked me for seeing something great in her!
						11
						12 Sent me a nice text on Saturday morning too
			14	15	16	17
			14 Listened to K,1 teachers as they shared frustrations re: spreadsheet for standards mastery as extra busy work - acknowledge + told them I would voice their concerns - they were appreciative	15	16 Helped calm a hysterical teacher down who received a subpoena for spring break, she thanked me for acting on it and helping her	17 Received text from 1st grade teacher saying she really appreciated me setting up a meeting w/ the super for her.
		20	21	22	23	24
		20 Provided a tour and time to new parent/student re: SFS program; she thanked us for our time and willingness to stay late	21	22	23	24 Outside Climate Auditor, Jim Haluk, shared that my school's culture overall is good and that something the staff do best + want changed is our admin team
						25
						25 Observation Meetings: Taylor - thanked me for support and opportunity Sydney - thanked me for support and suggestions to help her grow
						26
						27
						28
						29
						30
						31
— SPRING BREAK —						



# Photos of Gratitude:



# Data: Journal Entries

## DECEMBER/JANUARY

Dec. 28, 2021: Met w/ new teachers at school during winter break to answer questions and provide support. I felt **supportive** as I was able to answer questions, ease some anxiety.

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Jan. 20, 2022: Helped the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> grade teachers find science supplies. I felt **helpful** and **useful**!

# Data: Journal Entries

## JANUARY/FEBRUARY/MARCH

Jan. 21, 2022: Data meeting with new 2<sup>nd</sup> gr. Teacher to discuss ways to increase rigor for students, helped rearrange her math and reading blocks to support this. I felt **helpful** as I was being an instructional leader and guiding her!

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Feb. 7, 2022: Had my CPF meeting today with CFO and Maintenance Director. We walked the building and I received compliments on our building and how we have cleaned up closets, locker rooms, etc... and decluttered these areas. I felt **PROUD** b/c I spent some time this past summer cleaning out closets.

Feb. 16, 2022: Met with 3<sup>rd</sup> gr. Teachers to help problem solve Standards Mastery which led into scheduling conflicts. We reworked their whole day schedule. They walked away excited and I felt **useful** and **helpful**!

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March 1, 2022: Today, I held 7 parent meetings and over half of them were going to be questionable. All 7 turned out positive and some form of plan was put into place. I felt **productive and satisfied**!

March 2, 2022: This was the first time we brought families back into the classrooms to read with their kids. There were so many smiles and thank yous, 93 visitors in all! This **made my heart full**!

# Data: Journal Entries

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March 7, 2022: All IREAD-3 issues that came up, I was able to problem solve and testing ran smoothly. I felt like a **productive tech wizard**...which I am nothing close to being.

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March 21, 2022: Gave a building tour and took time to discuss and build some rapport with new parent/student for next year who will join our special SFS program with the teacher of program. Parent and grandparent were very thankful of the time we took to spend with them. I felt **proud** of our program and building and what we have to offer.

March 24, 2022: An outsider completed a climate audit with our staff today. He shared with me that one major take away from today is that something the staff doesn't want changes is our administration here at North Side. This made me feel **ecstatic and proud** of what our school family has become!

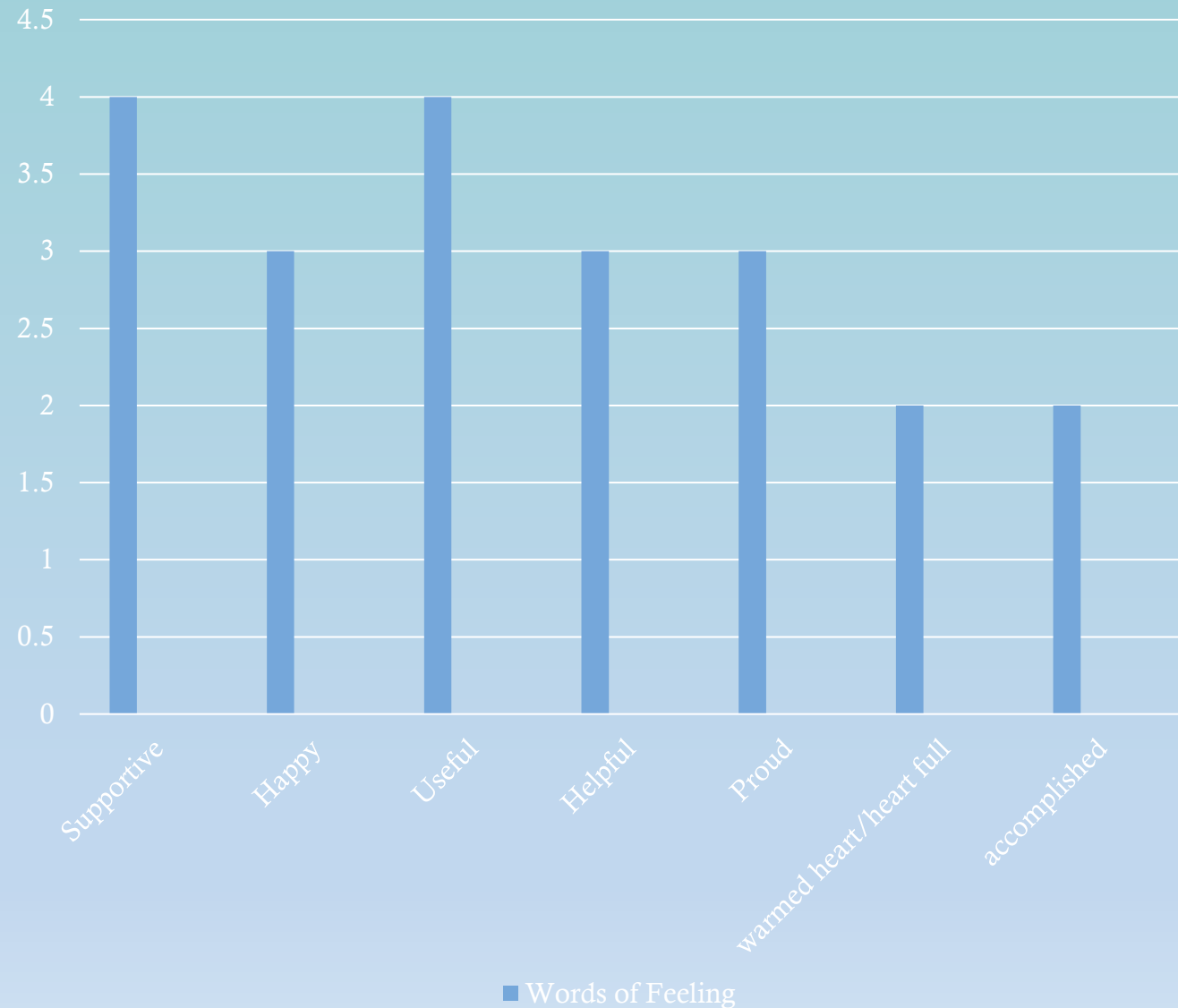
# Data Analysis:

The **FOUR WORDS** that continued to appear in the calendar acknowledgements/compliments from staff included:

***APPRECIATIVE, THANKFUL, SUPPORTED, AND GRATEFUL.***

Other words of feelings that were included in my journaling less frequently include: satisfied, productive, good, ecstatic, shocked, pleased, connected, and great.

Journal Entries: Bar Graph of Feelings



# My Discoveries:

- ◇ Before collecting this information, I allowed the negative situations that happened at school overwhelm me and overpower my focus and energy. By the end of each day, I was beat down and exhausted, on empty. Collecting this data allowed me to start focusing on the positive situations that I am involved in each week and re-focus on the fact that I do have staff and parents who are appreciative and grateful for my support and everything that I give and put into our school. As we all know, when you find the positives, it does make you feel full and keep you going. It reminds me why I love my job, why I wake up every day excited to see my staff and students each day. This focus helped me to refuel and be a better leader overall.

# My Discoveries, Continued:

- ◇ Now, don't get me wrong, there were days and even multiple days in a row where I did feel defeated and still on empty during this action research project. There were days where it seemed nothing went right, and everybody was upset, or I was picking up the pieces everywhere I turned. This is defeating and draining! It makes it hard for me to find a positive to focus on.
- ◇ Another struggle that I had during this action research data collection was keeping up on the journaling and calendar entries. I found myself weeks behind and then going back and using my school calendar and notes, text messages, and more to help complete the entries. Had I completed the entries daily, every few days or even weekly, I do feel I would have had more positives to help keep me going each week.

# My Discoveries, Continued:

- ◇ Another consideration is the timeframe that I collected the data, second semester was calmer than first semester for us at North Side. My 3<sup>rd</sup> grade chaos was more intense during first semester and involved more of my time with lesson planning, grading, and conferences. Second semester was not easy but did involve a permanent teacher in that grade level at least. Other issues did present themselves during second semester that brought tension, time-consumption, and exhaustion to my position.



# Next Steps...

- ◇ After seeing how focusing on the acknowledgement of my accomplishments and how they made me feel helped to refuel me as a leader, I feel this can help not only me, but many of my staff members! I would like to start sending an end of day e-mail to “All Staff” with 1-3 positives from that day and end the e-mail with an offer for others to share some of their own acknowledgements/positives from the day as well. Wouldn't this be AWESOME if we started a mail chain of positive things that happened each day?
- ◇ I also need to return to leaving positive sticky notes in classrooms when I visit. I used to do this in the past and have just gotten away from it due to always feeling rushed. This is not a good excuse and I need to make time for it! I will include support staff as well, They deserve just as much recognition!

**BY DOING THESE TWO THINGS ABOVE, I BELIEVE I WILL REFUEL MY PHASE BY FOCUSING ON OTHER'S ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS/POSITIVES THAT ARE HAPPENING EACH DAY AND SUPPORTING A SCHOOL CLIMATE OF POSITIVE FOCUS!!! I WHOLE HEARTEDLY BELIEVE IT WILL ALSO BE RETURNED! THESE NEXT STEPS WILL REFUEL MY BASE AS WELL ALONG WITH FUN, LAUGHTER, AND SELF-PAMPERING!**

# Bibliography

- ◇ Kahler, Taibi, Ph.D. (2020). Process Communication Model: PCM Leadership Profile
- ◇ Reiger, Nate. (2020). Seeing People Through: Unleash Your Leadership Potential with the Process Communication Model. Location: Berrett-Koehler Publishers



## Refueling Myself to Reach Maximum Leadership Capacity

**Principal Name:** Stephanie Leasure  
**School Name:** North Side Elementary School  
**Principal's Email Contact:** sleasure@eastnoble.net

### **Background Leading to My Inquiry (Slide 2)**

- Due to unforeseen circumstances, my 3<sup>rd</sup> grade team consisted of long-term substitute teachers (one was a retired teacher and the other had no teaching background) for an entire semester this year. One of my teachers resigned the day before students were to start school. The other 3<sup>rd</sup> grade teacher left for maternity leave 3 weeks into the school year and still has not returned due to health issues with her baby. The instructional coach and myself were completing all of the lesson planning, grading and entering of grades, parent/teacher conferences and material preparation on top of our own daily jobs until the end of the first semester. We also supported in parent communication throughout the semester. A permanent hire, brand new to teaching, started in one classroom at the start of second semester, but we are supporting a student teacher/long term substitute teacher in the other classroom until the end of the school year.
- With our district's SEL focus, each school has an environmental team (E-Team) working to implement school-wide expectations using the PBIS framework with restorative practices. My school's team had some members who were holding us back from moving forward due to mindset and disbelief of this work. Unnecessary attacks on the E-Teams coach were made during meetings which led to tears and setback. Negativity was affecting outcomes. All of this change in our team members and team itself, led me to hold difficult conversations that led to the toxic members leaving our environmental team and then one of them resigning from the school at the end of the semester and spreading rumors about me and my lack of support.
- On top of these two large ongoing additions to my leadership responsibilities, it has been a difficult year with parents and students overall. Students seem to lack respect; parents are not as supportive as years past and it is a year of high anxiety for staff and students. As the administrator, I take on the staffs work and personal well-being as I care about each and every one of them. Many have personal hardships that are tearing at them and they are doing their best to hold it together at school. I do my best to support them both with school and their personal issues by checking in on them and letting them know I am there to listen.

### **The Purpose of My Inquiry (Slide 3)**

Therefore, the purpose of my action inquiry was to find a way to refuel my base and phase motivational needs so that I may lead my school to the best of my ability.

I have noticed that my fuel tank is empty almost every day this year. It is hard for me to refuel for the next day or even the next week as I am overloaded and exhausted. If I am drained and

not showing positivity and being energetic and excited each day for my staff and students, then I am not modeling for them what I need them to do each day. I need to find a way to refuel daily, so I feel rejuvenated and ready to go at the start of each day!

Using my PCM Leadership Profile and being cognizant of my first- and second-degree distress behaviors, I will focus on making sure my PHASE motivational needs are met each day first, then my base needs. If I am honest with myself, I am good at meeting my base motivational needs, but not my phase motivational needs.

### **My Wondering (Slide 4)**

With this purpose, I wondered: How do I commit to meeting my phase and base motivational needs positively each week so that I can be a strong leader for my school?

### **My Actions (Slide 5)**

#### **REFLECTION:**

- It is my responsibility to problem-solve and make everything better. With this, I am always dealing with situations or issues that are broken.....
  - I have forgotten to stop and look for the positives (small moments) and take time to celebrate them!
  - I am not using my strengths to the best of my ability; I need to change this!

#### **DATA COLLECTION:**

- Journaling of how I feel when I provide support to staff.
- Calendar of January, February and March sharing acknowledgements and/or compliments I receive from staff members.

This data was not collected daily, it was collected as it happened.

### **Data Collection (Slide 5)**

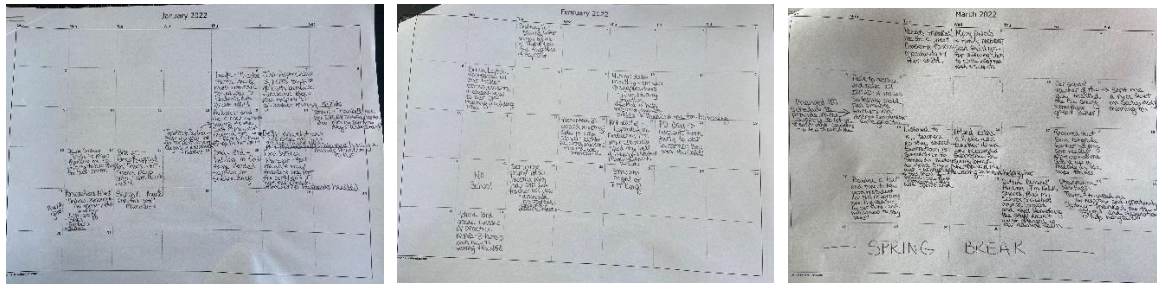
I collected my data in two different ways. I kept a small journal and would date a page and write down how I supported staff in a situation and then how that support made me feel inside. This data was collected from January through March.

I also collected data on a calendar with written documentation of acknowledgements and/or compliment supports I received from staff members. Again, this was collected from January through March. I did include some pictures of text messages and notes I received from some staff members.

### **My Data (Slides 6-13)**

#### **DATA COLLECTION:**

Calendars of written acknowledgements and/or compliments supports by staff:



### Journal Entries of how I supported staff and how it made me feel:

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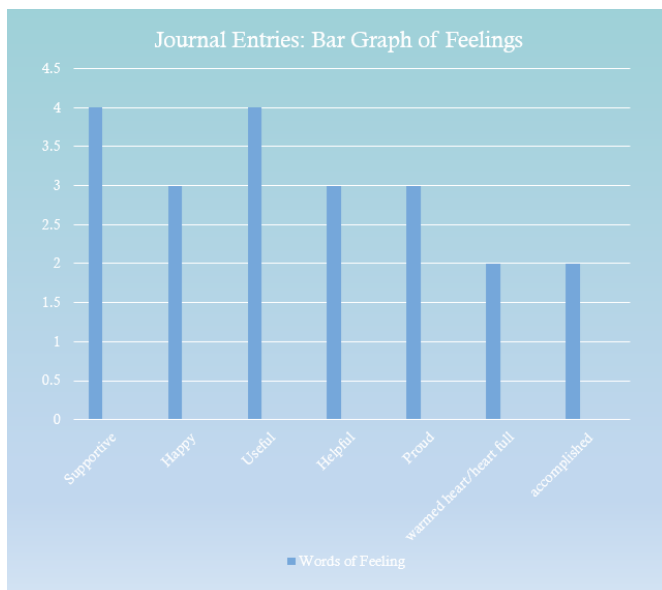
March 21, 2022: Gave a building tour and took time to discuss and build some rapport with new parent/student for next year who will join our special SFS program with the teacher of program. Parent and grandparent were very thankful of the time we took to spend with them. I felt **proud** of our program and building and what we have to offer.

March 24, 2022: An outsider completed a climate audit with our staff today. He shared with me that one major take away form today is that something the staff doesn't want changes is our administration here at North Side. This made me feel **ecstatic and proud** of what our school family has become!

### **DATA ANALYSIS:**

The FOUR WORDS that continued to appear in the calendar acknowledgements/compliments from staff included:

***APPRECIATIVE, THANKFUL, SUPPORTED, AND GRATEFUL.***



Other words of feelings that were included in my journaling less frequently include: satisfied, productive, good, ecstatic, shocked, pleased, connected, and great.

### **My Discoveries (Slide 14-16)**

In this step, summarize your learning in two - three succinct statements that illustrate the most important and critical facets of what you learned:

- Learning Statement One: Collecting this data allowed me to start focusing on the positive situations that I am involved in each week instead of always noticing the tough and difficult situations (negatives).
- Learning Statement Two: This AR project allowed me to re-focus on the fact that I do have staff and parents who are appreciative and grateful for my support and everything that I give and put into our school.

Collecting data in two different forms allowed me to start focusing on the positive situations I am involved in versus all the difficult situations I handle each day. As the administrator, I am always involved with the situations that might not have a great outcome, but this data collection helped me to realize that this is not what needs to define me. I need to embrace the support that I provide staff, students and families and remind myself how it makes me feel. Journaling allowed that to happen! Words that I felt through my journaling often included: supportive, useful, helpful, proud, and happy.

Before keeping the data, I always felt that I rarely heard words of gratitude from staff and families. This AR project allowed me to re-focus and see that my staff and families do appreciate me and the support I provide to them. I just need to slow down and see it for myself! I have received many notes, text messages and e-mail acknowledgements of thank you! Words that were commonly used from staff include: appreciative, thankful, supported, and grateful.

### **Where I Am Heading Next (Slide 17)**

As I have learned that a change in focus for myself has really helped to refuel me and keep me going, I feel this could be helpful for my staff as well. We have so many great accomplishments happening at North Side, yet we dwell on the mishaps, especially the teachers.

In order to help and support my staff to look to the positives and great things happening each day, I would like to implement the following things in my building:

- ◇ After seeing how focusing on the acknowledgement of my accomplishments and how they made me feel helped to refuel me as a leader, I feel this can help not only me, but many of my staff members! I would like to start sending an end of day e-mail to "All Staff" with 1-3 positives from that day and end the e-mail with an offer for others to share some of their own acknowledgements/positives from the day as well. Wouldn't this be AWESOME if we started a mail chain of positive things that happened each day?



- ◇ I also need to return to leaving positive sticky notes in classrooms when I visit. I used to do this in the past and have just gotten away from it due to always feeling rushed. This is not a good excuse and I need to make time for it! I will include support staff as well, They deserve just as much recognition!

BY DOING THESE TWO THINGS ABOVE, I BELIEVE I WILL REFUEL MY PHASE BY FOCUSING ON OTHER'S ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS/POSITIVES THAT ARE HAPPENING EACH DAY AND SUPPORTING A SCHOOL CLIMATE OF POSITIVE FOCUS!!! I WHOLE HEARTEDLY BELIEVE IT WILL ALSO BE RETURNED! THESE NEXT STEPS WILL REFUEL MY BASE AS WELL ALONG WITH FUN, LAUGHTER, AND SELF-PAMPERING!

I also plan to finish reading the book, Seeing People Through: Unleash Your Leadership Potential with the Process Communication Model.

### **Bibliography (Slide 18)**

Kahler, Taibi, Ph.D. (2020). Process Communication Model: PCM Leadership Profile

Reiger, Nate. (2020). Seeing People Through: Unleash Your Leadership Potential with the Process Communication Model. Location: Berrett-Koehler Publishers