

What Is Your Why? A Unique Look at Determining Your Leadership Identity

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Background That Led to Your Inquiry:

In 2017 I began my tenth year as principal at Jonathan Jennings. This milestone led me to deep reflection on my leadership identity. After reading an article from Educational Leadership, "Is Your School Better Because You Lead It?" my soul searching began.

After years of passion, dedication and desire to change the perception of our low performing school, I reached a point of great pride and accomplishment. We had reached every academic goal set by our staff, all of my facility updates were completed and our climate/culture was thriving. With all of our success, I also was left with a wondering of what is next?

Reflecting on the next steps and feeling a stirring I began wondering, "What is my Why?" I felt as though I knew the kind of leader I was hoping to be, but were my actions delivering on this promise? Therefore, the purpose of my action research was to determine if I was still leading with the same passion and dedication I had in the beginning.

Statement of Your Wondering:

With this purpose, I wondered "What is my leadership identity?"

"When I leave Jonathan Jennings, I want the staff to say these things about me...

She was passionate, supportive, caring and had high expectations for student success. I wonder if they will???"

Methods/Procedures:

To gain insights on my wonderings, I created a data collection process to allow the staff an opportunity to provide the feedback I needed on their views. This process began in January after I shared my wondering with staff. Over the next several months, I collected data in a variety of ways. I began with the decision making self assessment to determine if my decisions were leading us in the right directions. I also created a staff survey for all members to complete in an anonymous way for real life responses.

My next step was to interview three staff members I completely trust to share the good, the bad and the ugly. I knew these people were going to provide constructive, honest feedback to help me clarify my actions. In addition, I used the Johari Window Model to identify my blindspots as a leader as well.

The data I collected for the surveys was placed into a google form directly from our responses. I took narrative notes from feedback with colleagues with notes and specific improvement strategies. The self assessment data from the decision making model was calculated with suggested outcomes and the Johari Model listed blind spots for me.

Stating Your Learning and Supporting it with Data:

As a result of analyzing my data, I learned Self Decision Making Assessment Scoring Explanation: Scores between 144 and 92 indicate that you have not fully embraced an effective decision making pedagogy. With a composite of 134 this is an area I need to improve.

With the Johari Model several positive adjectives were duplicated: Fierce, confident, decisive and focused were identified. The hidden area within myself is different. In addition, it is unknown to staff that the desire to change the perception of our community has been my driving factor from day one.

Overall, the staff survey adjectives selected were on track with what I want my legacy to be. However, I learned that emphasizing my focus on academic success needs to be stronger.

Providing Concluding Thoughts:

The action research cycle was so beneficial to me in my time of reflection. I was pleasantly surprised in many areas of my doubts, as well as found a few areas that needed attention. As for the staff, I learned that they are more gracious than I ever could've imagined and overall we have built a wonderful school together.

As I move further, my focus from the data will be on my blindspots. With more attention placed on my influence for staff motivation and expectations, I will continue to give 100% of my efforts to culture and student success. I plan to utilize our professional development meetings with a focused "playbook" style of goals identifying our most difficult standards to master. We will include the standard, method, timeline and our progress monitoring tool to determine our progress.

In conclusion, leadership identity is always developing and changing with the needs of the school. Often we are distracted with state and district initiatives that can shift the focus of what is most important. As the leader, our role is to develop our teachers in the areas of relationships with students and setting expectations and routines. I have learned that as the leader I have been blessed with the huge responsibility of inspiring and developing others each day. Everything that happens within a school starts at the top and we cannot afford for it to be anything but excellent.

References:

Johari window

Harrington, I. & Luft, H. (1955), The Johari Window Model. The heuristic exercise to help understand relationships with themselves and others.

I Wonder...

What is my leadership identity?

Adrienne Bach
IPLI Action Research Inquiry
Cohort #5

My Purpose: Determine the specific ways my leadership at Jonathan Jennings Elementary has impacted our school.

In 2017 I began my tenth year as principal at Jonathan Jennings. This milestone led me to deep reflection on my leadership identity. After reading "Is Your School Better Because You Lead It?" my soul searching began.

"What is my Why?" I felt as though I knew the kind of leader I was hoping to be, but were my actions delivering on this promise?

Establishing My Leadership Identity:

One Life, One Story, Leave a Legacy!

**AND YOU'RE THE
ONE I'M LIVING FOR**

"When I leave Jonathan Jennings, I want the staff to say these things about me...

She was passionate, supportive, caring and had high expectations for student success. I wonder if they will???"

Method

- Decision making self assessment
- Staff survey for all members
- Interview with three staff members I completely trust to share the good, the bad and the ugly
- Johari Window Model

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Kafele - The Principal 50
Self-Assessment

In The Principal 50: Critical Leadership Questions for Inspiring Schoolwide Excellence, Ronit Kafele challenges principals to examine their leadership practice and what it takes for a school community to be successful. Using his 50 questions, WPI has created a self-assessment to aid principals in the development of their action research projects. Please take a few minutes to read each question and rate yourself! Use the "self-reflection" area for your personal thoughts on each item. These responses are confidential.

1. Do I lead with a definite purpose that drives everything I say and do?
 Almost always Often Sometimes Seldom Never
Self-reflection:

2. Do I aim to be intentional about what I do as a leader?
 Almost always Often Sometimes Seldom Never
Self-reflection:

3. Do I treat my leadership as a mission rather than as a career?
 Almost always Often Sometimes Seldom Never
Self-reflection:

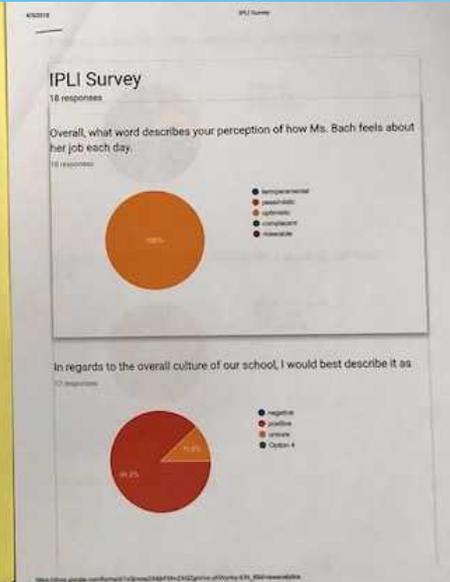
4. Do I have a vision of what I expect my students to achieve?
 Almost always Often Sometimes Seldom Never
Self-reflection:

5. Do I see myself as the number-one determinant of the success or failure of my students?
 Almost always Often Sometimes Seldom Never
Self-reflection:

6. Do I engage my staff in discussions about our school brand?
 Almost always Often Sometimes Seldom Never
Self-reflection:

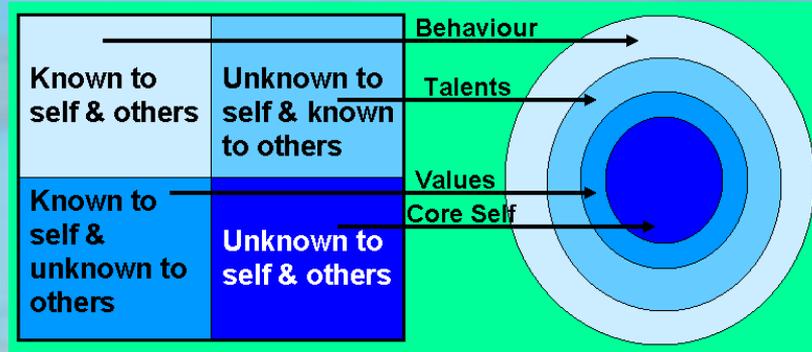
7. Do I ensure that my staff contributes to the development of our school's core beliefs, values, and guiding principles?
 Almost always Often Sometimes Seldom Never
Self-reflection:

8. Do I ensure that my staff contributes to the development of my school's purpose, mission, and vision?
 Almost always Often Sometimes Seldom Never
Self-reflection:



Data Collection:

- Surveys completed from all staff
- Feedback from colleagues with notes and specific improvement strategies
- Self assessment data from the decision making model
- Listing of blind spots from Johari Model



https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1x3jmcSS2A8jirFtifmZ4GZgnVvo-yKWynhy-tUN_i6M/edit#responses

Staff Survey

Data Analysis:

- Decision Making Self Assessment:

After completing the Transformational Leadership and Decision Making in Schools, by Robert E. Brower and Bradley V. Balch, My total composite score: 134.

Staff Survey Adjectives were 100% positive in nature. 9/18 used Caring, 2/18 used Passionate, 17/18 used supportive.

Johari Window: Analyzed responses of blind spots that were unknown to me and areas that are open with staff. Data from my self assessment with two categories of strengths and areas of growth.

What I Learned

Self Decision Making Assessment Scoring Explanation:

Scores between 144 and 92 indicate that you have not fully embraced an effective decision making pedagogy. With a composite of 134 this is an area I need to improve.

Johari: Fierce, confident, decisive and focused were identified. The hidden area within myself is different. In addition, it is unknown to staff that the desire to change the perception of our community has been my driving factor from day 1.

Staff Survey: Adjectives selected were on track with what I want my legacy to be. However, I learned that emphasizing my focus on academic success needs to be stronger.

Honest Focused Passionate Respectful Confident Creative
Energetic Helpful Straightforward

Innovative Fair Reasonable Approachable
Excited Fierce Supportive Fun Caring Loving

Goal Oriented Understanding Dependable T
rustworthy Funny Happy Loyal Responsible

Thoughtful Considerate Inspirational
Creative Committed Professional
Hard Working Organized

Decisive Competent Student Centered Invested

Next Steps:

Share my purpose explicitly and passionately with staff.

Address the areas of improvement suggested on the staff survey.

Specifically focus on culture and collaboration with our new staff merger.

Use the Turtle Inspirational Model to leave the legacy I want to leave.

(see handout)

https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1a8crNrfMLbY_8WOeVRvtHoPIWMk3W_I9ZJlv_q8iGIE/edit#slide=id.gc3432ba67_0_231