



# Leading the Journey

## An E-newsletter on EXCELLENCE in Leadership

VOLUME 1, NUMBER 7 • A PUBLICATION OF THE PACIFIC UNION CONFERENCE • March 2013

### In this issue:

- Tough Love
- Small School Leadership
- What's in a Name
- Fiscal Health Indicators
- Join the Journey



**Berit von Pohle**  
Director of Education  
Pacific Union Conference



**Ed Boyatt**  
Retired educator with 32  
years in administration

**Jim Roy**  
Professor of Education  
Pacific Union College

**Anita Molstead**  
Retired educator with 20  
years as superintendent

**John Deming**  
Retired principal of Walla  
Walla Valley Academy

## Tough Love

*Jim Roy*

“Patients want you to correct their irresponsible behavior, but they want it to be done in the genuine spirit of helping them, not to satisfy yourself by winning a power struggle.”

William Glasser

The quote above is from Reality Therapy, the book that propelled Glasser onto an international stage. While I am not a therapist, the quote spoke to me as an educator because I think students want something similar from us as principals. Students don't mind being corrected but not when it feels like they are losing a contest. Reality Therapy emphasizes the idea of responsible vs. irresponsible behavior, and Glasser became known for a get-tough approach, not only in psych wards and private practice offices, but in schools, too. Through Glasser's writing and speaking, through advertisements in journals and magazines, and through word-of-mouth testimonials, educators became aware of his matter-of-fact toughness, and it appealed to them.

As he saw, though, how teachers were latching onto the responsibility theme, and how they wanted to blame students for their irresponsible behavior, Glasser pulled back from his use of the word responsible. His “toughness” was always meant to be cradled in what he called “involvement.” Involvement represents a warm, caring relationship between two people, a meaningful connection between therapist and patient, or in education, between principal and student or teacher. It may be that the principal needs to correct a student who has made a mistake or to correct a faculty member who used poor judgment, but this interaction should not become a contest between the two people. The skill lies in the leader's ability to confront without attempting to control, to correct while preserving the student's or faculty member's sense of freedom.

At least two bad things happen when we go into

Continued on page 2

## Small School Leadership

*Anita Molstead*

The head teacher of a small school said to me at the close of my monthly visit, “You know, I don't feel like I'm doing a good job of teaching or being the principal. It's frustrating; there aren't enough hours in the day to do both jobs well.”

He went on to say that he had worked with the other two teachers in his school to set school-wide improvement goals, but had not found time to work individually with his staff as each worked on an individual professional development plan. He felt it was imperative to create a focus which would help them become an exemplary school in their community. As we brainstormed ways to work together to help make this resolution a reality, we developed a list of priorities including:

1. Time to work with his staff and a trusted superintendent on how to bring about changes in teaching/learning and including his superintendent to give added support and accountability in making changes in instructional priorities.
2. Time to help staff to list changes they see needed, and decide what assistance they need from each other as well as staff development that would support their endeavors.
3. Time for the head teacher to develop coaching skills so that he could help his staff as they worked to improve the quality of the teaching/learning throughout the school. As a superintendent I would need to be part of this process, providing release time by teaching classes when I visit the school.
4. Time for the entire staff to work together to develop a culture of learning, and include students as part of the process, so they would understand the commitments their teachers were making to continually improve themselves and their students.

Continued on page 2

## Tough Love

Continued from page 1

the control or contest mode. One, the focus becomes the contest, rather than the needed area of improvement. And two, the relationship is harmed. Whether between principal and student, husband and wife, or parent and child, a controlling interaction removes capital from a relationship bank account that is not that easily replaced. Over time, a controlling approach can bankrupt even our most precious connections with loved ones.

It's not that correction is bad. Correction is sometimes needed. The trick is staying in a place of love and empathy while seeking to maintain a necessary boundary. The apostle Peter came to understand this way of being and gently reminded us:

“Care for the flock that God has entrusted you. Watch over it willingly, not grudgingly — not for what you will get out of it, but because you are eager to serve God. Don't lord it over the people assigned to your care, but lead them by your own good example.” 1 Peter 5:2-3 ☩

## Small School Leadership

Continued from page 1

As a superintendent, I realized I would have to live with the very expectations I have for others, being open and willing to practice continuous improvement as I carried on with my work with schools, teachers and boards. Ultimately, the job of all educational leaders is to help their teachers excel, and by taking time to be in the trenches, working to help schools meet their goals, they can be part of the team to make exemplary Adventist education a reality. ☩

### Join the Journey

Sign up to receive the newsletter:  
send an email to  
[leadingthejourney@puonline.org](mailto:leadingthejourney@puonline.org)  
OR visit <http://puacedu.adventistfaith.org/leading-the-journey>.

## What's in a Name?

John Deming

So, what's in a name? Have you ever asked yourself this question?

As a college student, I worked with a man whose name was Shirley. (Made me want to know the reason why, but I never asked.) As an adult, I knew a lady named Shirley, who legally changed her name to Sydney, as she had never appreciated her given name.

One's name is an identifier, and to use a student's name well in conversations with her/him tells them you know them and they are important.

You're now into second semester. Do you know all of your students by name? Are you using their preferred name when talking with them in the hallway, classroom, or at an out-of-school encounter? Students need to know you believe in them and their dreams. One way this is demonstrated is by being able to call them by name.

As a principal, I took the first week of chapel each year to review school policies and other important information. Students were selected at random by a faculty member to answer questions, and the correct answer garnered a dollar. Enough help was given so the selected student would always “win.”

As part of the activities, new students were selected and I was asked to repeat their names. With great interest and fun, students waited to see if I knew the name, for not to know meant a \$2 bill to that student. I didn't lose many \$2 bills and the new student still received a dollar for taking part.

I tell you this to point out that each student is a vital part of your school and each one deserves to be known. Names are a great place to begin!

I have no magic formula to assist you. With one set of identical twins, I used the shape of their faces to help me remember who's who. Whatever it takes, know your students by name. It makes a difference! ☩

## Fiscal Health Indicators

Ed Boyatt

Superintendents attend hundreds of board meetings. I have suffered through many financial reports from volunteer treasurers to full-time business managers. I learned after a while that good reports include answers for the usual questions board members ask before they are asked.

Most financial statements do not answer questions of cash, receivables, and payables. I believe these questions are just as important as to how close the school is to budget. Since schools use accrual accounting (what is billed is recorded as income), it is even more important to know where a school stands in relationship to cash and bills which remain unpaid.

I suggest you have the following questions answered in writing before they are asked at your next board meeting:

1. How much income did the school expect this month from tuition, churches, and others? (amount billed)
2. How much money (cash) did the school receive this month and from whom?
3. What bills were not paid this month? (payables) What is the total amount of the payables?
4. How much money from tuition, churches, and others that is owed the school is past due? (receivables)
5. How long has each group owed the school? (age of receivables)
6. How much money is in the school's checking account?
7. How much money is in savings and reserves?
8. How close are the school's income and expenses to its budget this month?

*“Good reports include answers for the usual questions board members ask before they are asked.” ☩*