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## A preferred vision for administering elementary schools : a reflective essay

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## A preferred vision for administering elementary schools : a reflective essay

### Abstract

Effective principals have command of seven themes. They are: 1. A value in building trustworthiness between leadership and the staff. 2. A strong belief in the value of integrity. 3. A belief in developing a shared vision to build a strong school community. 4. A belief in having others participate in decision making. 5. A talent for and belief in clear communication within a learning community. 6. A belief in, collaborative goal setting and personal performance reflection to guide the school toward a shared vision. 7. A belief that ethical behavior strengthens leadership effectiveness. Throughout this paper I will describe these themes and discuss a plan for how to activate them as principal.

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A PREFERRED VISION FOR ADMINISTERING ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS:

A REFLECTIVE ESSAY

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A Research Paper

Presented to

The Department of Educational Leadership

Counseling, and Post Secondary Education

University of Northern Iowa

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In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Masters of Arts in Education

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by

Curtis P. Nielsen

December 1997

This Research Paper by: Curtis P. Nielsen

Entitled: A PREFERRED VISION FOR ADMINISTERING ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS:  
A REFLECTIVE ESSAY

has been approved as meeting the research paper requirements for  
the Degree of Master of Arts in Education.

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12-11-97

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Through my study of educational leadership I have come to the point of view that the effectiveness of a principal can be measured by the climate of the school. In order to build this climate my contention is that effective principals have command of seven themes. They are:

1. A value in building trustworthiness between leadership and the staff.
2. A strong belief in the value of integrity.
3. A belief in developing a shared vision to build a strong school community.
4. A belief in having others participate in decision making.
5. A talent for and belief in clear communication within a learning community.
6. A belief in collaborative goal setting and personal performance reflection to guide the school toward a shared vision.
7. A belief that ethical behavior strengthens leadership effectiveness.

Throughout this paper I will describe these themes and discuss a plan for how I am going to activate them as principal. As I have progressed through the program I have gained valuable insight into leadership. I have sited many authors while writing this essay. Warren Bennis (1989) has had a major influence on my convictions about educational leadership. He states,

First, they all agree that leaders are made, not born, and made more by themselves than by any external means.

Second, they agree that no leader sets out to be a leader per se, but rather to express himself freely and fully. That is, leaders have no interest in proving themselves, but an abiding interest in expressing themselves. The difference is crucial, for it's the difference between being driven, as too many people are today, and leading, as too few people do. (Bennis, p. 5)

Along with Bennis' influence on my leadership beliefs, Sergiovanni (1992) has also had a significant impact. The principal must impact the school and the relationships that need to develop within the school organization so that the school may be an effective institution of learning.

Prior to embarking on this journey through leadership training I thought an individual was, in various ways, given leadership. Now, I believe that true leadership comes through natural means, through a leader's desire to become him/herself, to behave as a leader habitually. This expression, I have come to realize, comes from a leadership paradigm, developed through reflection within the leader and experience gained during leadership. Learned characteristics such as, integrity, trustworthiness and honesty are central to this leadership standard. Bennis (1989) makes an important point regarding leadership aspirations. He contends, leaders want to express themselves "freely and fully" (p. 5).

I believe a leader's desire to lead will be sparked by his/her leadership paradigm and interactions in the environment. Effective leaders will accept the responsibility, learn along the way and be reflective about their leadership habits. I believe that the evolution of leadership is endless and that the rewards leaders receive outweigh the requirements of the followership.

As I reflect on my own leadership paradigm I find my leadership attributes are based on a foundation of integrity. I think, that if you don't do what you say you will do, you will lose or erode any confidence that others have in you and it will invalidate any other leadership characteristics you bear. I have observed that within the confidence given to leaders, trustworthiness is an integral part. I believe trustworthiness is shown by a leader in the ability to follow through with what they say they will do. I believe that integrity develops confidence and trustworthiness is the leadership outcome.

PROFNET (1990) moderator Tom Payzant states that trustworthiness is earned. "It deals with consistency of action, follow through, developing credibility and honesty" (tape 1). People generally will not trust a person just because they are in a management position. I believe that integrity sparks the trust and confidence others place in leadership.

Building on that foundation of integrity organization is also a valued characteristic. I think that being organized will allow me to positively and effectively impact a school. Organization has allowed

me to effectively chair several committees. Through the use of concise agendas, I believe that the meeting environment is organized and the task is clearly communicated to the participants. This has become a central theme to my leadership paradigm.

The final piece to my leadership paradigm is a value in vision. I believe that the leader needs to ultimately direct the future of the organization. In this age of educational turmoil and change, it is important for the leader to actively direct the school toward a meaningful future, a shared vision. The leader's intuition and "feel" for the vision is key. The principal should be in tune with current trends, the community and the school in order to cultivate and facilitate the shared vision. I feel that the leader that is not in tune with these variables will follow a course similar to a ship without a rudder. In education I believe that leadership without a vision is akin to educational malpractice and this type of educational practice is surely pointless.

Green (1987) states, "Making ethical sense of professional practice requires a grasp of the point of the profession" (p. 105). What is our point and purpose in education? This fundamental question, being a foundation for good leadership, is key to the success of the school. I believe if we lose this focus, as educational leaders, we will damage the reputation of the educational system we are serving and will abate the community's confidence in us. As I have asserted

educational leadership without a clear vision focusing on the point of *the profession will lead to educational failure.*

In a speech to University of Chicago students, Hanna Holborn Gray (1988) directed her remarks to the purpose of education, "To think about the aims of education is to ask what kind of person, what kind of human competence, what kind of goals might be most desirable for the social order and the quality of civilized existence" (p. 6). To be effective as an administrator I believe that I must focus my attention on the purpose of education to continually improve the climate of the school.

"A leader is an individual who accepts the authoritarian expectations of others to responsibly guide the activities and enhance the performance of an organization" (Guthrie & Reed, 1991, p. 10). I believe through integrity and vision, leadership develops and fosters collegial trust with followers. Leadership is not telling and ordering but rather, I believe, listening, encouraging and mentoring. I believe that collegial trust is developed through the leader's level of integrity and commitment to making him/herself become a servant to the followers or stakeholders. Willingness to build a shared vision with the staff is all important to the success of the school and, I believe, the effectiveness of the administrator.

### A Shared Vision

Guiding the school toward a shared vision is essential to effective leadership. I will use empowerment leadership, a leadership style that disseminates decision making power to the membership. I

will involve the school staff in consensus building processes which will cause common core values to emerge and a shared vision to manifest itself. This process of empowerment leadership, I maintain, is the best approach to building collegial trust. Showing the school staff that you believe in their professional judgment while developing the vision will strengthen their commitment to that vision.

I believe, competent administrators attend to a personal vision in order to sustain the desired direction of the school. However, I also believe effective leaders follow their vision by enrolling the stakeholders first via empowerment leadership. This desire to enroll stakeholders in the process may start as a conscious effort but needs to become a second natured act, an automatic procedure, part of the leaders personal philosophy, an act that is knitted to the leaders beliefs, unseperable from themselves.

I will use a process, adapted from Hughes and Ubben (1994). This process will allow all the membership to have input into the vision statements.

First of all it will be important for all members of the school community to have a role in this important task. Teachers, support personnel, and community members.

Once the group has convened I will divide the group into home teams. Each home team will have three to five members. The teams will have internal variability, each team will have participants from different areas or grade levels. Each home team will be given an

outline of topic areas. These topics will include staff expectations, student expectations, curriculum, discipline, positive reinforcement, communications, school community relations and other topics of need or interest. Each home team member will write a belief statement focused on each topic. The group will share their statements with each other and create a home team statement for each topic area.

One member of each home team will then meet to form the core group. The core group will share each team's statement concerning each topic and will create, rewrite or accept one statement for each. When the core group has come to consensus regarding each topic, team members will return to their home teams to reevaluate their statements. At this point the home teams can choose to accept, reject or rewrite the statement and reconvene the core group to reconsider the new statement. This process will continue to recycle until consensus is reached on each statement within each home team.

I believe allowing staff to become decision makers through the use of decision making teams would not only allow each staff member to utilize his/her talents but would also create commitment and give them a sense of importance in the operation of the school.

Once the paradigm of the shared vision has been accepted by the staff, everyday decisions can be filtered through it to reveal clear choices. If everyone is not on board with the vision then the school will not develop and thrive as a learning community. Crucial to all of this though is the leader understanding the point of the profession.

Green (1987) summarizes understanding the point of the profession well:

Tharasyrnachus argues that justice is simply whatever is in the interest of the stronger. He apparently believes that because rulers have power they can (and possibly do) use it to advance their own interests, therefore, advancing their own interests must be the essential point of ruling. But Socrates describes this definition as the confusion of two arts. In counter argument, he points to the case of physicians who, even today, may confuse the art of healing and the art of gain and, be such perversion, fail to see the point of their practice. (p. 106)

Effective leaders need to recognize that meaningful leadership today is seated in changing the norms of past autocratic leadership. I will involve others in decisions and those processes in order to learn different points of view to make decisions and stimulate change.

Patterson (1993) states,

Breaking out of the old box is risky business for leaders. To do so, they must throw away values based on personal power and control and accept new values based on the power of the organization as a whole and the commitment to core values.  
(p. 4)

Leaders who can manage the power that comes with leadership will be able to see the unique abilities of the followers in the

organization. How a principal handles this discovery of unique abilities, I believe, is essential to good educational leadership.

In my first tenure as principal I will make observing all parts of the school a number one priority. I think that observing the school and how it functions will allow me to see the unique abilities of the staff within the school setting. Through the smaller decision making groups I will allow for the dissemination of power, to flatten the school organization and allow the staff a role in decision making to the betterment of the shared vision.

DePree (1989) concludes, "When we think about leaders and the variety of gifts people bring to corporations and institutions, we see that the art of leadership lies in polishing and liberating and enabling those gifts"(p. 10). The leader who is able to understand and utilize his/her gifts and talents and those of the staff, and can clearly comprehend the context will cause the school to step up toward the shared vision.

Administrators are going to have to be problem solvers in the 21st century. PROFNET (1990) moderator Tom Payzant states, "They are going to have to identify the issues, formulate alternative courses of action, and use data anticipating consequences from alternative courses of action" (tape 1). Payzant believes it wise to involve others in crucial decision making.

## Shared Decision Making

Decision making teams need full disclosure of information and objectives to make their task not only real but meaningful. Too often I have talked with people who are ambivalent toward participating in a decision making process. They feel that a different or modified decision will ultimately be made by the administration anyway. They have never felt that leadership gave the decision making power to the team. I will be aware of this and learn to facilitate the group process so that the group clearly sees its direction in relation to the shared vision of the school. Attention to clear communication is vital at this level of decision making.

In the past leadership has meant telling others what to do. Today I believe that effective leaders are facilitators. As I stated earlier I believe that leadership is largely listening and encouraging. This is an attitude of service and facilitating. Facilitation is not putting a group together under the guise of shared decision making and then strong arming the group into a decision. I believe that being visionary and being a facilitator and teacher is much more difficult but more rewarding than being a dictatorial leader. Training is needed for administrators in order for them to "Break out of the old box" as Patterson (1993) mentions.

The giving up of power is uncomfortable for many leaders, especially if they have possessed the power for very long. I have had the fortunate opportunity to be mentored by the State Administrators

of Iowa 1997 Distinguished Principal of the Year, Debra Beving. Her leadership style is one which allows for input in decision making. She has developed a healthy balance of involvement by personnel in decisions and confidentiality in the decision making processes. These traits I have admired and have attempted to make part of my leadership style. I believe that in order for these traits to have lasting impact on my leadership I have to consciously attempt to enroll the stakeholders first and then by repetition these skills will become symbolic of my leadership.

To make leadership style changes is difficult for any leader but is particularly tough for a long time manager. Bennis (1989) notes, "... looking at our own context is as difficult for us as it is for fish to look at water" (p. 16):

Along with leadership learning how to move toward facilitation, teachers need to be trained in being decision makers instead of followers. The role of the teacher is changing in public schools. With site-based management teachers are gaining more and more responsibility toward decision making and direction of the school. Similarly the role of the administrator is also changing. Building trust within the school staff is critical for future leaders. The term site-based management implies that administration give up some of the management chores at the district level and allow the site to make decisions that are peculiar to them. Within the building,

what was once a simple top-down model in decision making is now a collaborative model.

In Theodore J. Kowalski's (1991), *Case Studies on Educational Administration*, case eight focuses on a first time superintendent, Dr. George Pisak who wants to make major changes in the district he is serving. This superintendent, most likely, had good ideas and was well meaning, but he did not spend enough time earning the trust of the other administrators. Consequently, they were reluctant to make changes toward school-based management as the new superintendent wanted. In my first administrative position I will spend time observing, learning and encouraging at the beginning of my tenure. I don't believe that making drastic changes in the school would be good unless there are major problems that effect the school climate and morale of the staff. Making changes would be appropriate if they clearly lead to a healthier school community.

Enrolling the staff in the decision making loop surrounding issues of concern will create a sense of commitment within the stakeholders. I would model an appropriate, trusting attitude toward the staff which, I believe, would foster an attitude of change toward new site-based management schemes, and ultimately benefit the school community.

In the Marshalltown Community Schools' Shared Decision Making (SDM) Model (1991), it's suggested that "each SDM team build trust between it's members first" (p. 6). The rewards of these

sometimes difficult tasks are great. Trust and mutual respect allow for freedom of thought to carry forth with appropriate, effective decisions. This relies greatly on the professionalism of each team member. During shared decision making processes the principal can make a tremendous impact by modeling appropriate, desired behavior. When the principal's beliefs and the school's vision is in harmony, the principal who models what he/she believes, will subconsciously direct others toward that belief or vision of the school. Guthrie and Reed (1991) postulate that the principal can utilize his/her position power in this way. Modeling the openness in team meetings and accepting others' points of view can create a productive team atmosphere focused on their mission.

Most who have worked with people know that people are generally acceptable to motivational techniques. The trick to motivating is to get subordinates to complete tasks not because you want them to, but because they want to. In other words, to direct subordinates to become intrinsically motivated. Intrinsic motivation will cause professionals to take more ownership of their action and consequently they will perform to a higher level (Guthrie & Reed, 1991, p. 247, 248). Frederic Herzberg distinguishes between motivational satisfiers and dissatisfiers. Dissatisfiers are extrinsic motivators categorized under the term *Hygiene*. They are (a) salary, (b) growth possibilities, (c) interpersonal relations, (d) working conditions, (e) status, (f) job security, (g) supervision, and (h) policy and

administration. Satisfiers are termed *motivation* by Herzberg and these consist of (a) achievement, (b) recognition, (c) work itself, (d) responsibility, and (e) advancement (D. R. Jackson, personal communication, October 28, 1992). The principal who focuses on motivating toward the satisfiers will promote a school environment that is professional and in-step with the times. By simply giving responsibility to staff and supporting their actions through recognition, an administrator can effectively motivate his/her staff. I would focus on the satisfiers when leading a staff. Through the use of celebrations at staff meetings, written recognition of achievements, personal positive comments and delegating responsibility I believe that I can effectively lead a staff. Breaking down the polarization of power in schools is important for the shared vision to manifest itself.

A course of empowerment leadership, I maintain, will allow the followers to find and develop more fully their strengths. This will benefit the customers of the school, the students, as well as develop a healthy environment where ideas of difference are freely exchanged. It will also allow for staff members to direct their attention to their shortcomings, moving towards self and professional improvement simultaneously.

Effective educational leaders, when confronted with times of decision, will cut through the environmental, political, and bureaucratic influences to find reasonable, sustaining solutions.

May (1983) states, "As the educational leader, the principal is obliged to use the resources available in the most effective and efficient manner possible" (p. 9).

Understanding that (a) directing the school staff to a shared vision pulls colleagues together; (b) leadership skills will gain followers trust; (c) the point of the profession impacts the school; (d) planning long term toward a vision encourages success; and (e) cultivating a healthy communication environment is essential to the school, are all leadership skills needed today and in the 21st century.

The leader who breaks out of the organizational constraints will clearly see, the point at which the school stands today in relation to the shared vision, the unique qualities of each staff member, and the role that they, as the leader, play in the ever-changing school environment.

I believe a competent educational leader should develop a vision for the learning community and formulate a decision making framework driven by the vision. Putting these things into practice requires an implementation blueprint.

#### Learning Community and Communication

"It has become a truism that effective leaders hold clear visions for their organizations and have skills to actualize those visions" (Boston, 1991, p. 87).

Effective leaders are forward thinking people. They observe the current social, political and educational climate and foresee the impact on the school they lead. Envisioning this future requires the leader to

direct necessary actions toward a shared vision. Senge (1990) states, "When people truly share a vision they are connected, bound together by a common aspiration. Shared visions derive their power from a common caring" (p. 206). Senge's statement puts into focus the power of schools and the connections that form a productive environment for learning and growing. Senge notes, "Maslow observed that in exceptional teams the task was no longer separate from the self... but rather he identified with this task so strongly that you couldn't define his real self without including that task" (p. 208). Clearly a shared vision is the key to an excellent school.

A shared vision will create a learning community. A school that transforms into a learning community will change in many ways. The most significant change will be the professional relationships of the staff and the community striving toward the shared vision.

Sergiovanni(1992) summarizes this point well:

The idea of a school as a learning community suggests a kind of connectedness among members that resembles what is found in a family, a neighborhood, or some other closely knit group, where bonds tend to be familial or even sacred. (p. 47)

Building a community within the school, I believe, will allow for all parts of the school to find an acceptable and comfortable purpose that focuses on the shared vision. If a focused purpose is missing from part of the community, progress toward the shared vision will be

impeded and the future success of the school community will be endangered. I would suggest that this is the point at which schools fail their customer, the community at large and the students they serve daily. How can the customers truly succeed if there is not a shared vision, when the student is subjected to several expectations that are not leading to the final product? This is the job of the principal to make sure that the staff is a cohesive group that works for that same outcome.

The ideal situation would be for the staff's personal values and the shared vision to become so tightly connected that a difference couldn't be acknowledged, as Maslow pointed out. To accomplish this melding of values and vision in the school, I believe, the principal will need to allow the staff a vital role in the formation of the vision and mission statements. This will require clear, unbiased communication between community, staff and administration.

The best advice for administrators today -- involve all pertinent staff in major decisions. In order to accomplish this I will have to first develop a relationship with each staff member so that I may communicate with them clearly and accurately. This will have to be done early in the principalship. I believe that if a positive relationship is not built with the staff and school community then a shared vision will not become real. The vehicle to create the relationship will be positive communication.

Communication is very complicated and permeates all types of educational environments. Administrators need to be good listeners, speakers and writers. Leaders will need to understand and utilize, to their benefit, any communication technologies available to them (PROFNET, 1990, tape 1). Each individual has personal preferences of communication style and learns best from a different communication modality. I will focus my attention on what types of communication, ie. written, oral, or other type, best conveys appropriate messages to each staff member and the school community. Dan and Mary O'Hair (1992) state, "Principals should not treat everyone alike and should be sensitive to teacher stress and demographic differences" (p. 20).

When confronted with delicate communication situations such as evaluations, the administrator should take care to understand, as much as possible, the "individual preferences for message strategies" (O'Hair & O'Hair, 1992, p. 20) sought by the staff member. I believe that good communication is the one leadership skill that all effective leaders value and seek to improve upon. Integrity, trustworthiness, credibility or any other leadership attributes are moot if you don't communicate well. Building a positive communication network will strengthen the school's effectiveness.

Covey (1989) indicates that only 10% of communication is the words that we use. However, 60% of communication deals with body language and 30% of communication comes from how we say words. It is plain to me that the message sent to an individual is not always

the message received. It will be crucial that I pay attention to what I say and how I say it to the staff and the public. I have learned these past few years that thinking about what you are going to say is time well spent.

Because of my belief in shared decision making and the importance of a shared vision, I believe that communication in schools today is more and more important. Not only for the administrator but for the staff as well. In order for progress toward the shared vision to be positive, clear, accurate communication needs to take place.

The O'Hair (1992) Study points to this fact that in a school context, the administrator needs to use several communication techniques depending upon the people involved.

Communication can be the difference between effective and ineffective leaders. Needless to say, the effective leader will have a good command of communication techniques and strategies and a knowledge of when and with whom to use them. I am and will continue to be interested in how I communicate to others. It is so vital to the effectiveness of leadership and the success of the school.

### Goal Setting and Reflection

Building a collaborative goal-setting process would be my highest priority when moving into a principalship. This would allow the school to thrive in a purposeful environment. Focused goals, accepted at every level of the school, are imperative. Affirmation of the goals at each level of the school makes a connection that allows the

school to become focused on the shared vision. I believe that giving colleagues a stake in building the community goals would develop a solid foundation from which to build the school community. Goals are the vehicle for moving toward the vision.

By developing leaders within the school community I believe that I could, after a time, afford myself the opportunity to step back and make very focused and critical observations of my performance and the performance of the community toward the shared vision. I believe that my observations balanced with observations of peers and superiors would yield valuable information for leadership and school improvement. I will request that superiors give feedback often. I envision this developing in the early years of the principalship.

A visionary leader sees the future context of the school community, the implications and the role it will play in the community at-large. This cannot be done from within the confines of the organization. The principal, utilizing group processes, will create an avenue from which to remove him/herself to make the context come into focus. Bennis (1989) states this well, "So we know the problem. But as long as we are caught up in the context--the volatile, turbulent, ambiguous managerial surroundings that will suffocate us if we let them--we can't solve it" (p. 16).

In the principalship I believe that the leader needs to continually step back and take a good reflective look at what is really happening in the school. Because the principal is the leader power will be acquired

with the position. This position power will prevent the principal from having a totally unbiased view of the school. But, I believe that the facilitative role that I will take will allow me to see from the "press box" what is happening "in the game."

The school is a society in and of itself with a culture all of its own. With a shared vision and focused goals accepted at all levels of the community, allowing staff input in decision making, foreseeing their visionary and facilitatory role in the school, I believe the administrator can develop a positive school community.

Leaders need to go beyond the data to achieve the best result in a particular situation. Payzant (PROFNET, 1990) believes that leaders have to take all of the information available and envision the best path for the organization to take. The effective principal will first reflect on what is best for the students served. If the decisions aren't good for the students they're the wrong choices. Then, he/she will build off what is already in place. Finally, a plan of action will commence, focused on the attainment of the school's vision.

I believe that intuition, the leaders instinct, manifests itself from the paradigms that exist in the leader. More specifically; moral decisions come from a connection between the leaders paradigm structures and the "vision and mission of the school" (Craig, 1992, p. 57). I believe that reflection is the key. As I stated earlier gaining superiors insights and observations will be key to effective reflection.

## Ethical Leadership

The effective leader will not only emulate behaviors he/she desires for staff members, but those behaviors need to be ethical (PROFNET, 1990, Tape 1). I believe that integrity and organization are the characteristics that will allow me to lead ethically. In my opinion building my leadership on unethical principals will lead to failure in leadership and would destroy the school community's confidence in me. I believe that it is essential that personal and professional ethic be examined and adjusted prior to the principalship. I have done that these last few years while in the program. I have changed my views and more importantly my practices with regard to my leadership roles. It doesn't seem like work any more to lead a group in a meeting or to give a colleague a compliment or to behave ethically in my role. To me I can not separate those actions from myself. I believe that I have and will continue to develop my professional voice. Reflection has been the key for me. During times of reflection I have been much more difficult on myself than any colleague would ever be regarding my professional behavior. I feel that people look up to me not only because they know that I am studying to be a principal but also because they see the improvement, personally and professionally, in my work. I believe in seizing the reflective juices inside and making lasting changes that benefit myself and those around me.

The effective principal, realizing that he/she is constantly being assessed, needs to develop personal ethics and values that are

compatible with the community they serve. Again, it is extremely important that a leader become an example for subordinates (PROFNET, 1990, Tape 1). Craig (1992) states, "As teachers become aware of the educational leader's moral perspective and framework, they (probably) will want to model it, since they like being treated this way" (p. 58).

In an article entitled "A New Slant on Leadership Preparation", Barnett, Caffarella, Daresh, King, Nicholson, and Whitaker (1992), discuss seven core values. These values are "grounded in the belief that unless leaders develop moral and ethical consciousness, they will find it difficult to make decisions and will lose a sense of purpose" (p. 72, 73). With vision and goals in mind, knowing the purpose in the organization is imperative for the effective leader.

### Summary

While developing a meaningful purpose for all parts of the organization through the shared vision is the foundation of a good school, connecting with the community in a visionary sense allows the school and community to become one in education. This unity can only be derived from the leader's ability to direct the school towards the shared vision.

The skills and qualities it takes to lead school community stakeholders toward their shared vision are many. This complicated task requires personal characteristics of integrity, trustworthiness, and desire for clear communication. It is my contention that these

characteristics must be topics during self reflection. Reiterating what Bennis (1989) states, "...looking at our own context is as difficult for us as it is for fish to look at water" (p. 16), informed assessments of leadership characteristics need to be sought by the leader. Leaders need to recognize that they can't do it all or foresee it all, to create the best school for their community. They need to seek out the advice, counsel and perceptions of skilled administrators and staff to get a clear picture of their leadership. Self reflection and the cultivation of integrity, trustworthiness and a desire for input from others is key to effective leadership.

Leaders need to develop clear beliefs about personal ethics and involving others in decision making, goal setting and building a school's vision. These are key components to lasting effective leadership in schools.

The leader who can exemplify these behaviors, can master these skills, and can adapt to a myriad of situations objectively, will truly have the "right stuff" to effectively lead a school community into the 21st century.

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