

2022-10-07_64_Five for Friday_FINAL AUDIO

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Hello colleagues and welcome to the Assistant Principal podcast. I'm your host, Frederick Busky. The goal of this podcast is to help improve life and leadership for assistant principals. Today's episode of five for Friday recaps the strategic leadership emails for the week of October 3rd through seventh twenty, twenty two. If you already get my daily leadership emails, then I hope you'll find some added value here. And if you don't already subscribe, you can find a link on my homepage at frederickbuskey.com Many readers like to begin their mornings by reading the email and setting a leadership intention for the day.

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But don't feel any pressure to subscribe. You're already doing more to grow yourself than many others out there simply by listening to the podcast. So we're picking up this Friday on a theme that we began last week. Remember that the particular story we're looking at here is a state mandated reading program called letters that requires elementary school teachers to spend several extra hours every week learning and working on this program, and then mandate specific ways to do their lessons and teach.

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We noted that not everybody's on board with this, but we also mentioned that it doesn't have to be a state mandate that we're talking about, right? This could be any, any number of other things. But what we're really trying to do is understand why people don't do the things that we ask them to do. We also looked at the idea of $m - V$ divided by E or motivation equals value divided by effort. The more I value something and the less effort it is, the more motivated I am.

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The lower the value and the higher the effort, the less motivated I am. Ok, so let's pick up with our story. On Monday, we talked about clarity. Just because we as leaders think the message was clear doesn't mean that the other person understood. That overwhelmed teacher that we talked about last Thursday, I think, who's trying to juggle too many things they might they may not have understood what the expectations were. Instead of assuming the teacher is ignoring or nonconforming, I could begin with asking what they think I want to see. I could also provide key look forms of what implementation of my expectations might

look like.

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As an aside, when you're working with highly skilled people, it might be beneficial to decide collaboratively what implementation should look like. A shared goal is so much more powerful than one that's just communicated from above. On Tuesday, I noted that events in people's lives and in the world impact their work. We have all taken that lesson in multiple forms the last few years and as crazy as things have been, they're really not going to settle down. In my younger years I believed that work and life should be separated and that when life was challenging we just put all that stuff in a box and put it U on the shelf.

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Suck it U soldier on. That was or if it wasn't, it. It is now. It's a flawed, unrealistic and unhealthy approach. Now, having challenging stuff is not an excuse to not perform at work. At the same time. Last June when my mom had emergency back surgery. Any plans I had to do new things or make changes were all put on hold. So things in people's lives really to impact their ability to do their jobs, especially when we're asking them to do something new and make some kind of change or big implementation.

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I concluded Tuesday with kind of a hard dose of reality. Let's be honest, right now, I think the world is not in a good place. We're being confronted with the effects of climate change almost daily. As I record this, a hurricane is barreling down on Tampa. You'll know when you listen what the results are, but it's just getting ready to hit landfall now. Putin is talking about using nukes. The divisiveness and the ugliness of our politics creates tension and angst among family and friends, the economy's bizarre.

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And the disparity of opportunity based on race, language and other factors is being exacerbated by all these things. It's a lot to absorb, it's a lot to carry. It's a hard time right now. So understand all of these external events as well as what's going on internally for people. It impacts our ability for change. On Wednesday I put something out there that maybe is controversial. I don't know. But I suggested that sometimes people are right to resist change. All those things we talked about yesterday or that I covered in the email.

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Yesterday All that negative stuff. Just I guess, being honest, why? Why are we doing big mandated implementations right now? We're coming out of two years of a pandemic. There's still all this other stuff going on why? Why are we doing that? And if you've been in this business very long, you know where this is headed. You know, work doing a big implementation this year. There's a lot of money behind this at the state level, so we'll probably do a bunch of stuff next year, but after that, this thing's going to fade out.

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In five years, if I ask you about the letters program, you're either going to roll your eyes or have no clue what I'm talking about. To a lot of times when people resist change, especially people that have been around the block a few times. They're right. Our penchant for big change is sometimes mind boggling, giving the lack of results from most of these initiatives. And again, experience people know this. Some of them can form and continue to do what we ask, but others, they drag their heels. They resist. They even sabotage. And I'll be honest and you're free to disagree with me here, but I can't condemn them for this. They're acting rationally based on prior experiences.

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When we go back to M - V divided by E. This huge initiative that's taking all kinds of time. The value is little because it is not going to be followed through on. It is not going to be sustained. And let's be honest, as school leaders with everything we've got going on, are we following up on all these trainings? Are we doing look Fors and doing observations and then using those observations to drive the next level of training? No, we're not because the training is mandated by the state. So people are getting training, they're going out, they're being expected to practice, but they're not getting the support. And we really don't have the resources to be doing that.

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Ok, I'll get off my soapbox, but if you've listened to me much, you know one of the principles of strategic leadership is progress over action. And with a big change, we are taking lots of action for very little progress. So Thursday is really more about the takeaway from the last two weeks than an actual reason why people don't do what we ask them to do. The biggest thing is that we just need to stop making assumptions. If people aren't executing, we need to invest time with them and just have the conversation again, not in a way that's accusing.

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But just sit down and say, hey, what's, what's happening? Where are you? How do you do this? Well, continue to be present. When you invest time with people, they'll tell you what they need, either directly or indirectly. And learn about people. Know what drives them and

know what they're experiencing in their lives right now. Finally, let your inquiries be driven by care and by your ethical responsibilities as a leader. Instead of engaging because you want them to be better workers, engage because you want them to find joy and meaning in their work. So I've already stolen a little bit of my own Thunder in this podcast episode, because Friday what I talked about was the problem of big change.

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You've already heard me go on about that, so I won't repeat myself. But let's think about the way things really could, and I would say should work. Change should be driven by the people that are participating in the work. That's our teachers. They should drive the changes in curriculum and the changes in teaching practices. Any prolonged initiative should include elements that lead to immediate improvements in people's work at each step of implementation.

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And I would argue this. In the face of mandates, it's the responsibility of leaders to identify the elements of the mandate that are consistent with the needs of the organization and then integrate those elements into the real work. It's also the responsibility of leaders to protect teachers from having to do onerous work that is not really going to have a major impact on instruction. Again, some of you may disagree or push back on this and in the daily email I really invited people and asked people to email me and give me feedback I don't want to be.

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I guess I'm OK with being a contrarian, but I also want to hear how I'm wrong and hear what other people are thinking. So if you have thoughts about this, if I miss the boat, or if you're pumping your fist up and down saying go get them, I'd love to hear. Send me an email frederick frederick dot com. This wraps up this week's five for Friday rendition of the Assistant Principal podcast. If you enjoyed today's show, please subscribe and rate this podcast rating. The podcast really does help other people find it.

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And as a side note, if you're listening to this podcast on October seventh or October eighth, I am on a plane on my way to Kenya, so I'll be gone the next two weeks. On the daily email, we're doing some reprints. I'm not sure if we're going to get the five for Friday editions out. I'm trying, but there's a lot to do before I get on that airplane. If we don't get stuff out, Please be patient with us and know that I should have some really interesting experiences and perspectives to bring back and share with you all on my return.

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All right, that wraps up our show. I'm Frederick buskey. I hope you'll join me next time for the Assistant Principal podcast. Have a great weekend cheers.