

2022-10-28_70_Five for Friday Final Audio

Hello colleagues and welcome to the Assistant Principal Podcast I'm your host, Frederick Busky. The goal of this podcast is to improve life and leadership for assistant principals. Today's episode of five for Friday recaps the strategic leadership emails for the week of October twenty second through twenty eighth twenty two. This is the second week in a row where we're republishing greatest hits while I'm off adventuring in Kenya.

One of the things I neglected to mention last week was what exactly do I mean by greatest hit? A greatest hit is simply an email that generated a lot of feedback from readers, so I hope that they're generating lots of ideas in you too. Remember, if you don't already get my emails, you can subscribe by going to frederickbusky.com and there should be a link somewhere on there that says subscribe to the daily email. Ok, let's get on with the recap. On Monday I talked about broken systems specifically. I had been on the road and was using a different computer and was having all kinds of technical issues, and in the end was typing out that email on text edit, which is the simplest piece of word processing software that you can find.

I posed a question that when our systems break down, we're faced with a critical decision. Do we rebuild and try to fix the system or do we just find something that will make do like in minimally viable process? I also suggested that the answer might vary with the context. But take a minute and think about your systems. Are there things that simply aren't working? In the present moment, is it even worth trying to fix them? And is there a simple stopgap process that you can use in place? This is a time of tumultuous change in education. Just feels like we're getting hit from so many directions at once. And I think one of the things that we get guilty of is trying to cling on to things that aren't working.

Or when we're mandated to do things that aren't going to work or aren't productive, we just tend to fall in line. So I would use this email as a way to really think about the systems, and those include your internal systems, but also the things coming from the outside. If there's stuff that's not working, can you just find a way around it? And can you just use something that's much simpler and less elegant? On Tuesday, I encouraged you to stop fixing things.

I asked, what do leaders do? Many people look at leaders to fix things, but that's a trap. If you're busy fixing things, how will others learn to do their own fixing? If you're busy fixing things, who's helping people grow? Fixing things feels good, so it's easy to jump in and just start fixing. But how can you break that habit? Try asking the people that own the problem. What are some possibilities for improving the situation? And then be quiet and listen. On Wednesday, I talked about the road to nowhere. The road to nowhere is a partially completed road that was promised to link several rural communities with ancestral cemeteries from the original roads that were destroyed as part of the dam building during the time of rural electrification.

The road to nowhere has many of the hallmarks of big change. The goal was ambitious given the terrain and habitat. The resources were inadequate and unanticipated events derailed the project. Now there's a half built road that goes to nowhere. Like so many big change projects, it lies abandoned, only partially completed. I wrote this email on december sixteenth twenty one, so the close of last fall. And honestly, looking at it now, I'm amazed at the number of big massive mandates and programs that are being pushed down from state and district levels on schools.

Like our road to nowhere, there are so many complicated variables going on right now, it's a really

difficult time. And I can't see how any state or district for that matter, is going to muster enough resources to really see these projects through. I wish that instead of focusing on big change, we could just look at some of the little things to help improve our schools now. I mean, imagine if every one of our teachers could get better at classroom management or could get better at asking powerful questions or managing group work. Those aren't huge things. But almost every teacher in every school could get better at those small things, and we could actually make progress on that and imagine what our schools might be like if every teacher just got a little bit better.

So what do you do if somebody's trying to build a road to nowhere in your school? Hell, that's probably another week's worth of emails. Thursday's email was written last April. He wrote it while I was up with my wife and her family in Northwest Ohio. Helping my father-in-law clean out a lot of the things that had belonged to my mother-in-law, who passed away in December of 2020. It was a really emotional time for all of us, but one of the things that was beautiful was how present we all were for each other.

I discussed my own limited emotional capacity at that point in time, as well as this whole idea of presence, and I offered a couple takeaways. 1st that we all have a limited capacity for work, and sometimes that capacity is consumed by things outside of work, and that's called life and it's OK. The second thing was that the most powerful thing we can do for others is to be fully present. I closed with the challenge.

I concluded the email with a challenge to find three people this day and through your presence and your body language, to convince them that while you are with them, they are the most single most important person in the world. And finally on Friday. I kind of feel this is cheating because it's just from August twenty sixth twenty two, but it got a number of reactions and people shared some really cool thoughts and extensions on the main idea.

But this email was about a hike that I'd done with my son Colin and I talked about how on a Friday when we when we hiked in, it was beautiful clear sunny skies and then on Saturday when we hiked out, it was completely foggy and even though we knew the trail. It was kind of hard to see our way and I played with this idea of being a leader where. You know the path, you know what stuff is supposed to look like, but it's really obscured and so you can't really be sure.

So I asked three questions for reflection in low visibility. Should we trust ourselves and keep moving forward? Or should we slow down and consult our maps? And what's the danger in slowing down compared to the danger of moving forward without clarity? I think the big takeaway this week is. That there's lots of stuff out there that we cannot be sure of. There are lots of things that don't go the way we planned.

There are lots of things that aren't going to work. And navigating this strange world that we're in right now. Requires you to be present. It requires you to be thoughtful and intentional each day. And I think when we're in doubt. When we're not sure which way to proceed. Start with building community and start with being present for other people and then work with your team to figure out the answers. You're the leader. But you don't have to know everything.

You're the leader, but you don't have to have all the answers. You just need to be able to listen and ask the right questions. 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 and you remember. If you want to subscribe to the daily emails, you can find a link on my home page at frederickbusky.com I'm always trying to improve the show, so if you have feedback, please email at frederick.husky.com.

And if you'd like to find out more about what we're doing to serve assistant principals, you can head

over to my website at frederickbuskey.com backslash the assistant principal. Next week I'll be back from my road trip to Kenya and hopefully be able to share some stories and good leadership moments with you. Until then, I'm Frederick Buskey and I hope you'll join me next time for the Assistant Principal podcast cheers.