



Improving life and leadership of assistant principals

Assistant Principal Podcast Five for Friday Template

Hello colleagues and welcome to the Assistant Principal Podcast. I'm your host Frederick Buskey. The goal of this podcast is to help improve the life and leadership of assistant principals. Today's episode of Five for Friday recaps the strategic leadership emails for the week of September 12-16, 2022.

We can't be great leaders without being intentional. An easy way to become more intentional is to begin your day with a leadership reading. Here's my invitation for you. Subscribe to my daily email (you'll find a subscription link in the show notes or at frederickbuskey.com). Then, each day, when you are at the point of opening email, read my email first. 100-300 words, so it should take about 90 seconds. Then give yourself another 90 seconds to think about the message and set a leadership intention for the day. It will make a difference, and that difference will compound over time.

Monday September 12

At this time of year, **my garden can be overwhelming**. We have had lots of rain. The warm weather plants are diseased and dying from blight. The soil is depleted, and many of the shrubs are about ready for a good pruning, as are the raspberries. The wood chip mulching of my garden that was supposed to be done in June is mocking me every time I walk outside.

To make matters worse, a big windstorm took down some significant tree limbs and I never did finish the greenhouse. And fall greens need to be planted. 🙄

When I get overwhelmed, I have a bad habit of going out and just tearing into the first thing I see. I may spend a couple of hours bouncing around the garden, doing a bit of this and some of that. **I can work very hard, and I usually get some good things done.**

But do I get the right things done?

Usually not.

Focusing on what is important requires presence and intention.

The problem with being in urgent mode is that I stop being intentional and present.

I just start doing stuff. Hoping that I can somehow get it all done.

Here's the thing – I can't get it all done. I have 1 ½ acres and my kids are grown and mostly gone. I can't do it all.

Tuesday September 13

Pavlov's dog, you remember that, right? Neurologist [Ivan Pavlov](#) conditioned a dog so that it associated a bell with food. When Pavlov rang the bell, the dog began to salivate as if it was getting food.

Our brains work in a similar fashion. We can learn to associate one thing with another, even when there isn't a logical connection.

One night last week I couldn't sleep. I decide it would be better to be productive than to just lie in bed staring at the ceiling. So, I walked across the hall to my office (the good and bad of a home office) and began working.

Do you know what I did from 1-3 am?

I cleaned up my email inbox. I moved things out, flagged others, and cleaned it all up.

It felt good when I finally went back to sleep.

When I got back to work in the morning (a bit later than usual 😊), I realized that in those two hours I had **achieved nothing meaningful**. All the emails that needed responding to still needed responding to, and the emails I had moved were irrelevant – no matter which folder they would have been sitting in.

But it had felt like I achieved something at 3:00 am!

Have you ever added a completed item to your to-do list just so you could cross it off?

It isn't very different from salivating.

Wednesday September 14

How different is your job from my garden?



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Let's be completely real. For many of you, it doesn't matter how many hours you work, there is not enough time in the day to get **everything** done.

Think about this.

What does it mean that you cannot get everything done?

Hey, I could use some feedback on this one!

Consider taking this ONE question **poll**: Is it possible for you to get everything done in your job? (yes, maybe/sometimes, no) **[Mara can we do thin in CK? If not don't worry about it]**

Thursday September 15

When I asked you yesterday if you could get everything done in your job, what kinds of things did you think about?

My guess is that most of you thought about the **tasks – reports, schedules, paperwork, projects, email, phone calls, and discipline** (for you p-12 folks).

Did you think about developing your people?

Coaching, mentoring, training, supporting? Did they appear on your radar?

Hmmm...

Remember, if the urgency topic is resonating with you, please see below and sign up for the free webinar. Registration closes in six days!

Friday September 16

The hardest thing about being a leader driven by urgency is that you are too busy to find a better way to lead – to live!

Urgency stops us from being present.

If we can't be present, we can't reflect, and it is difficult to be intentional.

IT DOESN'T HAVE TO BE THIS WAY!



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Takeaway

This big emphasis on urgency is the result of my failed attempt to focus my school leadership colleagues on instructional leadership. I began this fall trying to help people focus on the needs of their newest teachers, but many were (are) too busy to invest time with our most important teachers.

I just want to change this. As leaders, we **MUST** be able to invest in growing and developing our people. Substantive improvement cannot occur without developing people.

I do hope you will join me on September 22nd for the webinar, Escaping the Blackhole of Urgency. Even if you do not struggle with your priorities, you probably work with leaders who do. Why not encourage them to attend, and tag along so you can support them?

It's just a thought.

Friday's reflection question: If you invested 45 minutes in growing people every day for one year, how different could your organization be?

Cheers!

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 to find it.

I'm always trying to improve the show, so if you have feedback please email me at frederick@frederickbuskey.com. If you'd like to find out more about what I'm doing to support assistant principals, you can head over to my website at frederickbuskey.com/theassistantprincipal.

I'm Frederick Buskey and I hope you'll join me next time for the Assistant Principal Podcast.