




Early Edition

A publication of ACSI Eastern Canada - Early Education Division

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From the Editor's Desk: Painful Leadership



Being a leader is hard enough; whether it is in a secular or faith based setting, you are being watched and criticized more than you are being encouraged. When you are in a decision making role, you need to make the difficult choices

which would often not please everyone, however it needs to be done. Are you ready for the challenge? According to Jeff Iorg's book "the Painful side of Leadership" he says that Christian leadership is often a painful process since we need to move forward even when it hurts. We are called to lead and lead we must, through pain, through difficulty and through opposition. We must lead when we know it is going to be painful. Some situations cannot be avoided, however Iorg lists three main strategies that we can learn to implement in order to do what we are called to do.

A. The first step is to take a courageous stand.

Courage comes in many shapes and sizes and it does not have to be dramatic to make an impact. Making courageous leadership decisions require discernment and skill. It is usually a process that needs to be thought through carefully so that you can manage the painful consequences you may experience. Iorg offers the following steps to create a guiding rubric:

1. Create a worthy issue: make sure it is really worth the pain and potential sacrifice.
2. Make a measured decision: develop a series of practical steps to work through the process.
3. Pray about it: pray for God to prepare you for whatever decisions you may face.
4. Gather information: collect as much pertinent information as possible to keep you well informed as well as best practices other have used in similar situations.

- Connect with those who will be directly impacted by your decision and include them in the process.
6. Deliberate about your decision: plan how you are going to announce your position, sustain your involvement and manage the consequences.
 7. Consult counselors: every leader needs consultants to turn to for reflection on major issues.
 8. Privately decide: making a decision privately means that you come to a settled conviction.
 9. Publically announce your decision: must be done in a way that supports, encourages and educates your followers.
 10. Manage the results: when you take a courageous stand, there will be consequences that must be managed continuously.
- B. Leading a significant change is the second step to follow.** Implementing change with people in your organization cannot be done without pain. No one likes to be thrust out of their comfort zone as you are asking others to trust your promise that the future is better than the present. To avoid some of the pain, build a strong relational trust before you launch major change initiatives. Check your trust level to be sure that it will support the change you are proposing. Realize that there will always be a small percentage of people who will not follow this but continue to move ahead knowing that it can be a long but fulfilling process.
- C. Modeling a challenging commitment is the third step.** Part of leading change successfully is to model the vision you are challenging your followers to embrace. Leading by personal example is an integral part of Christian leadership and before we can convince others to make a commitment, we need to do it ourselves. Share appropriate details to meet the needs of others and not your own needs. Are you ready for God's new assignment for you? Greet the New Year 2012 with this great thought!

Supervisors: your starting point!



As you evolve into your role as supervisor or director, you will discover that there are more responsibilities that need to be under your leadership. Match what you do now with the following initial requirements that are considered to be a basic starting point:

- meet with educators and teams to support problem-solving, curriculum explorations and the development of documentation skills.
- coach educators/staff about observing children and scaffolding learning in connection with your centre's pedagogical philosophy.
- develop classroom practices that are reflective of a strong image of colleagues, families and children.
- purchase program materials and equipment.
- support your team in implementing in-depth curriculum investigations and encouraging the involvement of all children in the classroom.
- assist in the orientation of new staff and act as a resource to all staff.
- provide direction, leadership and supervision to your colleagues who need your guidance.
- coach, mentor and council team members about human resources, program and personnel issues in relation to the values and beliefs of the centre.
- support classroom educators with environmental reflective checklist, classroom profiles & strategies.
- review and modify program schedules and plans to ensure operations are efficient and consistent with the values and mission of your organization.
- facilitate professional development experiences to include other organizations and in-service training.
- consult with the Director on staff strengths and needs and on assisting with goal setting plans for individual staff.
- comply with the policies and procedures of Children's Services and the new umbrella, Ministry of Education in Ontario.

This list does not include the daily administrative duties that require substantial time and bookkeeping skills as well as the interpersonal responsibilities needed to connect with families, inspectors, visitors, board members and others. Measure what you do now and see what can be consolidated, delegated or deleted. You may surprise yourself!



The Power of Motivation

Do you want to make someone's day? Is there a colleague, parent, friend that needs some sincere encouragement? Helping others feel valued does wonders to uplift the workplace atmosphere. Here are seven easy steps:

1. Your arrival at work: do you arrive late, stressed out and grumpy or do you arrive early with a smile? Walk around and greet people.
2. Use simple, powerful words: saying "thank you" and "please" and telling others that they are doing a great job makes a BIG difference all the time.
3. Make sure people know what you expect: think about ways you are communicating with others and be as transparent as possible without hiding your agenda. Be up front and clear in a positive way.
4. Provide regular feedback: if you are leading a team, give feedback continuously so that there is an opportunity to build up a positive working relationship together (also works with parents!)
5. Positive and not so positive consequences: sometimes there is need for a reality check with others; develop consequences that are relevant, meaningful and are ones that move towards tangible improvement.
6. Discipline: there is nothing magical about this; all it takes is the drive to be consistent and to do it on a regular basis.
7. New ideas: lifelong learning needs to be an integral part of who you are and what you hope to achieve. Look into webinars, online courses and do not be afraid of learning about new ways to do things. Getting caught in the vortex of self-pity and fatigue will only encourage you to spiral downwards, taking everyone else with you. Flip the coin and work on motivating those around you...you will be amazed at how uplifted you will be yourself!

Memorable Quotes

"Storms make oaks take roots" Proverb

"When the best things are not possible, the best may be made of those that are" Richard Hooker

"He who hesitates is lost" Proverb

Government Changes



As January 2012 arrives, we will all find ourselves under the governance of the Ministry of Education (MEDU) in the department of the Early Learning Division instead of the MCYS. At the moment, not too much will change as the regulations of the DNA will still apply but be inspected by new individuals positioned in the newly formed Child Care Quality Assurance and Licensing Offices throughout Ontario. All information stemming from that office will now be transmitted through email and not by regular mail, so you will need to submit your centre's email address to your designated licensing office. This information should have been mailed to you in the middle of December and outlines some of the new procedures for submitting serious occurrences. During this transition stage, much will remain the same but there will evolve some expected changes and modifications to staff qualifications and possible child:staff ratios as the MEDU looks into this area with more discernment. Many of the changes will affect those childcare centres that rent space on school property and as a result will be subject to changes imposed upon the public school system whereas the stand alone centres will temporarily have less of an impact at this point. Not much information is forthcoming at this point as much is yet to be determined but please proceed with caution as this new governance compliance takes over. We will need to learn how to rise to the occasion while sustaining what we do as Christian learning centres. Our funding model will gradually decrease as more capital needs to be streamed towards the early learning centres in the public schools. It is a good time to work with your Board in strategizing ways to be more financially independent. More news will be provided as it unfolds and stay tuned to your local networking groups.

No expiry date....

Smiles Hugs Manners Compliments
 An unexpected cup of coffee or tea
 Five minutes of solitude
 Laughter

ACSI Early Education Conference

Date: Saturday April 28, 2012.
 Place: Tyndale University
 Time: 8:00 -3:00
 Goal: Lifelong Learning, Fellowship, Fun,
 Professional Challenges, Inspiration

Are you ready to try something new? Are you willing to be challenged? Make someone's day and invite a friend to come and be your guest at our upcoming conference! This year's theme is:



Registration forms will be available soon. Reserve that time now to join us ☺

Winter Health Tips...



The winter months seem to herald the approach of the flu and cold season which affects all of us at some level. Some helpful hints:

- try to have regular bedtime hours for your children as well as for yourself.
- wash hands frequently and refrain from touching your face (your hands inevitably picks up germs everywhere and they can be easily transferred to you through your mouth to your throat.)
- eat well balanced meals daily and drink water and fruit juices throughout the day.
- use a humidifier to keep your mucous membranes from drying out which causes minute cracks for germs to enter.
- avoid contact with those who have colds.

Leaving Impressions...

- Man builds for a century; the Christian builds for eternity.
- Prepare and prevent instead of repair and repent.
- You never get a second chance to make a first impression.

A New Year's Resolution

The Promise Prayer

- To be so strong that nothing can disturb your peace of mind.
- To talk health, happiness, and prosperity to every person you meet.
- To make all your friends feel that there is something in them.
- To think only the best, to work only for the best, and to expect only the best.
- To be just as enthusiastic about the success of others as you are about your own.
- To forget the mistakes of the past and press on to the greater achievements of the future.
- To wear a cheerful countenance at all times and give every living creature you meet a smile.
- To give so much time to the improvement of yourself that you have no time to criticize others.
- To be too large for worry, too noble for anger, too strong for fear, and too happy to permit the presence of trouble.
- To think well of yourself and to proclaim this fact to the world, not in loud words but great deeds.
- To live in faith that the whole world is on your side so long as you are true to the best that is in you.

...Christian D. Larson