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Photo: Joel Muniz

MINORITIES & SUCCESS

<http://minoritysuccess.us>

Publisher.....MSPG, Inc.
Web Design.....Blue Cyber Media
Editorial.....Michelle Rad
Lay out Design.....Farimah Farahpour
Coverpage Photo.....Microsoft 365

Your comments are encouraged.

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Vol. XXXIV No. II ISSN# 1058-6318
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Leadership For An Uncertain Future

By Terry McKenna

Thanks to the Coronavirus Pandemic, we have never needed leadership more than we do now. The question ownership must ask itself is, Do our current leaders have the capacity to lead my organization into an unknown future? Leaders today must be: forward-thinking, strategically flexible, and adaptable, with a willingness to challenge the status quo and conventional wisdom. Leaders must have a healthy disregard for the impossible, and the skillset to think strategically and plan systematically. Does this sound like the leaders in your organization? If not, then the more important

question is, What are you going to do about it? What you do next is what matters the most!

Leaders, historically, and this will never change, are responsible for three things: 1) produce results, 2) lead, and 3) develop future leaders. Now that the Coronavirus Pandemic has ushered in a new normal, which has drastically changed the rules of engagement, we can add a forth responsibility for today's leaders: reenergize their people and their organizations.

For most organization, the Coronavirus Pandemic and it' aftermath have upended

life as we know it. The resulting pain, grief, and economic dislocation will be felt long into the future. The first priority for leaders, therefore, is to lead with empathy and compassion as they revitalize and reenergize their exhausted teams and organizations. Organizations are fatigued. They need to catch their breadths in order to regroup and prepare for the second act - the post-pandemic future. Organizations need to become future-ready.

The pandemic has blown all the traditional limitations out the window. Everything is on the table. Anything is

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possible. The pandemic offers a once-in-a-generation opportunity for change. The case for reimagining your organization and taking bold actions has never been clearer. But to do this, you need leaders; real leaders, not people merely filling a leadership position. So how do you know if you have real leaders? Here are five key questions that can help you assess the leaders in your organization:

1. Your leaders consistently produce results. The operative word is consistently.
2. Your leaders develop future leaders. How many leaders have your current leaders developed in the past five years?
3. Your leaders have followers who are energized, focused on the mission, possess a can-do attitude, and

willingly follow their leader.

4. Your leaders are forward-leaning, think strategically as well as tactically, and

plan and prepare for the future. Or do they react to the future once it arrives at

their doorstep? BTW - the problem with the future is that it always arrives

before we're ready for it. Should the future arrive at your doorstep before you're

ready for it - guess what? It's too late!

5. Your leaders challenge your organization's status quo and dogmas. Do they

push your organization to get better, faster, and more efficient, or do they quietly

play the hand your organization deals them?

As difficult as this time is for many, it's also the opportunity of a lifetime. This is a time of extraordinary change. The whole world is upside down, but that spells opportunity for business leaders whose eyes are wide open. Your eyes have to be wide open because opportunities and silver linings don't fall from the sky squarely into your lap. Opportunities and silver linings only reveal themselves to those who go looking for them. If you look past the hardship and struggle, this can be a very exciting time. Opportunities are around every corner and people are desperate for solutions. You will only benefit from this crisis if you see it as an opportunity. If you look for hardship, you'll find it everywhere; if you look for opportunities, you'll find those everywhere as well.

Every opportunity has an expiration date. The only remaining question to ask yourself is, Will you and your leaders seize this opportunity?

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Why Companies Are So Bad at Treating Employees Like People

Herminia Ibarra

Few disagree that the time is ripe for reimagining complex organizations so that they are more human and more agile. But existing models for how to make the shift seem to offer a choice between a rock and a hard place.

Take the thorny problem of developing people. Anachronistic annual performance appraisal systems, everyone agrees, must give way to more fluid and continuous feedback. Or, consider the issue of working flexibly while maintaining *anesprit de corps*. Standardized arrangements and face-time ism, we concur, must cede to more bespoke arrangements and an

outcomes-orientation.

But, while the ideals are noble, the jury is still out on just how to re-invent the workplace. Managers today seem to face a Goldilocksian choice, between approaches that are either too tight or too loose to change a corporate culture that still pays insufficient attention to the human factor.

At one end of the spectrum is humanizing by fiat. A large company I worked with recently recognized that it was failing to develop its people. Senior management decided that had to change, and that only forcing tactics

would do the trick. So they bought and rolled out a “leadership” system that required all managers to log five weekly development goals for themselves and their direct reports, and to track conversations about the multiplying objectives. A two-hundred-plus page manual outlined the new terms and processes. Cynicism followed.

On the other end, often by unintended consequence rather than by design, is humanizing by fear. When Netflix abolished annual performance appraisals and fixed vacation time in favor of “adult conversations” and

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personal discretion, one critic told me “who’s going to take much time off in a company that systematically culls the “B” players.” Amazon’s “feedback-rich” culture is another example of too much of a good thing, yielding offensive practices like the use of its hyperlinked employee roster to give anonymous upward feedback. As reported in a scathing New York Times [article](#), cynicism follows.

As I listen to the current debate about humanizing the corporation, I’m reminded of an award-winning 1993 ethnography by Professor James Barker of Marquette University that shows how even the best intended of management initiatives can evolve in paradoxical ways. Studying one organization’s transformation from a traditional hierarchy to self-managing teams, Barker was surprised to find that the change produced even tighter control than what existed under the old-fashioned hierarchy.

Ronald, one of the technical employees Barker interviewed for the study, told him that he felt more closely watched under the new egalitarian system. While his former boss might have overlooked him coming in a little late occasionally, for example, his team had a “no tolerance” policy on tardiness. They monitored members’ behaviors closely and imposed sanctions for non-compliance.

Instead of loosening the “iron cage,” as sociologist Max Weber famously called the sort of rule-based, bureaucratic control that we know associate with lumbering corporations, Baker argued that flatter, more egalitarian systems sometimes tighten the cage more powerfully, thanks to peer pressure and what psychologists call “internalized control,” our zealous adherence to norms of our own creation.

As we tout the obvious benefits of the “Silicon Valley” model, we would also do

well to remember Ronald and Barker. Without the benefit of an impartial bureaucratic allotment of paid time off, for example, it can be hard to tell what’s fair, what won’t let the team down, or what won’t hurt one’s career. So we work more instead of less. And, when busy bosses are lacking in interpersonal skills and performance pressures pervert the best of intentions, employees may prefer an imperfect annual performance appraisal to no feedback at all or, worse, a constant cold shower of unsolicited opinion.

There is little doubt that discretionary effort by people who are empowered to give their best produces not just better morale but also better products and services. The historical record shows a mix of better and worse attempts to achieve neither too tight nor too loose but “just right” control, a word that is as out of fashion as it is accurate. Corporate leaders will just have to keep trying.

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How Do I Communicate Better With People at a Distance?

By Kevin Eikenberry

The saying goes; absence makes the heart grow fonder.

While that may be true in some cases, another old saying is also true:

Out of sight, out of mind.

Both hold shades of truth for any of us wanting to communicate more effectively with people when we are separated by space. More often though, the second holds more truth at work than does the first.

If you are in business today, you

likely deal with this situation at least occasionally. But most of us deal with it every day. This situation is; Communicating with customers or prospects, Communicating with vendors, Communicating with colleagues on projects, or, Communicating with people we lead who don't live nearby.

In a simpler time, the communication options at our disposal were few, and the number of these situations relatively rare.

Not true today - and more tools haven't exactly made it easier. I can't "solve" this challenge for you in one short article; but what I can do is give you five things to think about that will help when you apply them, and as you will see tools are only part of the solution.

Talk About It

While it might not seem necessary to talk about how we will talk with someone, we know that communicating at a distance creates challenges. That means we might

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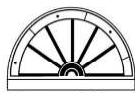
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need to do things differently. Talk to people about how they best like to communicate, what is helpful to them, what times of the day work best for them and more. When you create some understanding and agreements about your communication, you have taken a big step towards improving it for a long time to come.

Pick Your Tools Wisely

It's harder than it used to be because there are so many choices. Are you going to call or email? Are you going to Skype, Facetime or Hangout? Or maybe you will Text, IM, Yammer, or Slack? You might use the conference line or WebEx or GotoMeeting? Are you going to use video or not? Is a voice mail helpful or not? How about a business line or cell phone?

Whew!

Think about the tools you have at your disposal and talk about which ones you are going to use. And then, whichever ones you select, make sure that both parties (or all parties) are comfortable with using these tools. This is a level of complexity we never had to consider when we would just walk down the hall and all we had was a land line. Make sure whatever tools you use will be successful.

Pick Your Tools Situationally

And it isn't just about the tools themselves, it is about using them at the right times for the right purposes. There are times when a text message may meet the communication need. And yet, it can't be the only tool in your bag. Emails are great for many things, but aren't good for a conversation - after two or three emails in a thread, pick up the phone. Since we aren't able to be face to face, video can be the next best thing - use it when talking about complex or challenging issues. Own several different hammers. Pick the right one for the task, and that is what you need to do as a communicator as well.

Make Time

If you want your remote communication to be more effective, you must invest the time for it. Because it is more complex, you can't just take it for granted or just let it happen. If you want to have effective communication with people you must communicate with them, and when you don't see people in the parking lot, at the coffee pot or in the hallway, you have to make the time for those

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conversations. This leads to the fifth point.

Plan Time

As a leader, you might see this idea as putting some time on the calendar for “one-on-ones” with your remote folks. This is a good idea, but I mean more than that. First, it doesn’t just apply to leaders - if you are a co-worker at a distance, put time on the calendar with folks. When you do that you make the conversation intentional, you make sure it happens, and you fundamentally change your relationship with the other person. They know you care enough to put the time on your calendar. Don’t underestimate the emotional value of that.

Looping back to the first point above, make sure that the times you set make sense on your agreements about frequency and time of day. It is one thing to just get on someone’s calendar; it is another when you force it to work on your schedule and timeline.

If you are a leader of a team where some (or all) of those team members are remote from you, we have a range of ways to help you improve your effectiveness. You can learn more about those services here.

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Four Keys to Developing Great Leaders

By Madeline Frank

Everyone is a teacher to someone. Celebrities, athletes, and people in the public spotlight may not want to be viewed as a role model; but they are.

So are you. With your family, the people you work with, and within your community. The lessons that we teach others by the way we live our every day lives speak louder than any ad campaign.

One person who has been lauded as the “winning-est coach” of all time, John Wooden, viewed himself as

more of a teacher than a coach.

“Knowledge is not enough.”

Coach Wooden in his early years as a basketball coach at Dayton High School said, “I was a leader who couldn’t teach but didn’t know it.” His team was having a losing season. He was “knowledgeable” and experienced about the game and knew the essentials but he did not know “how to teach it”. In his Pyramid of Success, Coach calls knowledge “Skill” and put it “in the heart” of his Pyramid.

Teach students how to do it!

Coach said, his former coach at Martinsville High School, Glenn Curtis had the skill and knew “how to teach”. Coach said, “Knowledge is not enough. You must be able to effectively transfer what you know to those you manage-*not just the nuts and bolts material, but your standards, values, ideals, beliefs, as well as your way of doing things.* Most of all, you must teach those under your leadership how to become a real team rather than a group of individuals who simply work

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at the same place for the same boss. All this is only possible if you know how to teach.”

Coach Wooden’s Four Principles of Effective Teaching:

As an English teacher, Coach learned how to teach by breaking down “teaching into a set of four components: **demonstration, imitation, correction, and repetition.** These four principles are the key to effective teaching.”

Lessons: Teach with Patience.

Coach Wooden said, “Mistakes that are corrected by a leader—a teacher who is fair, knowledgeable, and patient quickly disappear. There is something inherently simple, noble, and modest about a leader who sees his role as a teacher, not as a boss. The teacher’s function is to help the student to be their best; a boss views his employees as helping the organization achieve goals. Coach wanted his players to know that they were working with him, not for him.”

One of my first teachers was my Grandmother Mary Chernick Leader. When I was seven, Grandma Mary came to visit us. When she discovered I could not read, she quietly sat down beside me and patiently pointed to the page in my book and read a line on the page, sounding out each word for me. She then had me repeat that line slowly and carefully pronouncing each word and then asked me to try the next line the same way. Grandma enjoyed reading and explained to me how you could visit anywhere in the world and go on an adventure through reading a book.

On a table nearby, Grandma had a large Hershey’s Chocolate bar and a small bottle of soda pop. Every page I read pronouncing the words correctly, Grandma would hand me as a prize, for good work, a piece of chocolate and a sip of soda pop. This was our “little secret” as my Momma never allowed soda or chocolate in the house.

Grandma taught me to read with kindness and patience. If I made a mistake she would say quietly, “Mimi, sound it out slowly. Try it again, you can do it!”

She was a ferocious reader who devoured newspapers, biographies, and she loved doing crossword puzzles. These efforts kept her mentally sharp and helped her in her efforts of teaching me to read.

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Coach Wooden led by Example: “Action Speaks Louder Than Words.”

Coach Wooden said, “I used to smoke cigarettes as a young high school coach at South Bend. I would quit during the basketball season to set a good example, but then I was also setting an example by smoking-a bad one. So I quit.” My example, I felt, meant more than my words.”

More is caught than taught in leadership. Practice what you preach.

One of Coach Wooden’s favorite poem’s that helped him quit smoking was written in the mid-’30s:

“No written word, no spoken plea can teach our youth what they should be. Nor all the books on all the shelves, it’s what the teachers are themselves.”

When I was 17, I attended Virginia Commonwealth University, VCU, as a full scholarship student on the violin. As part of the scholarship obligation, I played my violin as a member of the Richmond Symphony, studied and excelled in my freshman classes, and assisted Professor Peter Zaret, my violin professor, in teaching his adult beginning violin class.

Music education majors were required to take a class on learning to play the violin for credit.

Before attending VCU, I had performed in Carnegie Hall, 4 months before, graduated from high school at the North Carolina School of Performing Arts in Winston-Salem, North Carolina graduating with my high school diploma, and my Violin Performance Diploma. That summer I performed and studied at Wolf Trap Music Festival in Vienna, Virginia on full scholarship.

In teaching Professor Zaret’s class of adult beginning students they needed to learn the following:

-How to stand straight and tall and balance on their feet, how to hold the violin and bow, how to make a sound on the violin by pulling the bow across the string, and finally where to place their fingers on the violin to play simple tunes.

We began the class from the ground up: Balance of feet

Step 1: I first demonstrated to the beginning adult violin students how to stand straight and tall with their

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shoulders down and balance his or her feet like a tree with the roots going down.

Also I demonstrated how to bend my left and right arms from the elbows keeping them close to the body.

Step 2: Then each student took a turn by imitation, how he or she would stand straight and tall, balancing their feet, and bending their arms from their elbows keeping them close to the body.

Step 3: Next, going around the room once more, I made corrections showing each person, the little details they were missing.

Step 4: Each student again showed by repetition how they were to stand straight and tall, balance their feet, and bend their elbows keeping their shoulders down.

Each step was done with patience and paying attention to the smallest detail.

Our next step was to hold the violin. I demonstrated to them how to hold their violin with their shoulders down, bending their arms at the elbow. We followed our four steps - demonstration, imitation, correction, and repetition.

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We began the process again this time with learning to hold the violin bow.

Step 1: I showed them by demonstrating how to hold my bow by making a loose fist keeping the thumb and fingers curved putting the fingers on the bottom of the bow called the frog. The fingers are close together with the thumb and second finger touching forming an oval shape.

Step 2: Each violin student, as I walked around the room, imitated how I had shown them to do it. As each student took their turn they watched how the other students were doing it. One student had huge hands and had trouble holding the bow. I had him make a loose fist, curving and bending his fingers, and then wrapping his fingers around the bow.

Step 3: Next, going around the room once more, I made corrections

showing each person the little details they needed for a good position of holding their bows.

Step 4: Each student again showed by repetition how they held their bows.

Each step was done with patience and paying attention to the smallest detail.

Our next step was to make a clear sound on the violin with the bow: I demonstrated to them how to put their bows on the string of the violin, drop their elbows a little to put the weight in to the string and pull a sound from the violin by leaning into the string with their index finger on the bow and pulling the bow across the string to make the string vibrate.

Each violin student, as I walked around the room, imitated how I had shown them to do it. When they had difficulty, I would have them lean into the string with their index finger on the bow,

dropping their elbow slightly with a little weight added.

Next, going around the room once more, I made corrections showing each person the little details they needed to make a clear focused sound.

Our last step was repetition, repeating the process over and over to practice making a clear smooth sound. I reminded them to practice what we were working on so they would improve by the next lesson.

Each step was done with patience and paying attention to the smallest detail.

Coach Wooden said, "You haven't taught until they've learned."

Dr. Albert Einstein said, "If you can't explain it simply, you don't understand it well enough."

By being a role model and adding in to your daily life Coach Wooden's four

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components of teaching -demonstration, imitation, correction, and repetition you will become a better and more effective leader, coach, mentor, parent, friend, and teacher.

Andrew Hill and Coach Wooden said, “Remember, corrections shouldn’t be given in anger, and if you wait to correct behavior until you are angry, it will be difficult to strip your feelings from your comments. But mistakes that are corrected by a leader-a teacher- who is fair, knowledgeable, and patient quickly disappear. There is also something inherently simple, noble, and modest about a leader who sees his role as teacher, not as boss. The teacher’s function is to help the student to be their best; a boss views his employees as helping the boss achieve his own goals.”

Andrew Hill said, “Coach Wooden wanted his players to know that they were working with him, not for him.” Remember, whether you are a leader, boss, coach, or parent you want the people you are working with to feel that they are “working with” you, not for you!

So, who will you guide and help to improve their skills with Coach Wooden 4 teaching components? Start today!

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Behind Every Business is a Life

By Helaine Iris

I'm going to share a very personal story. My sister-in-law (who was a devoted entrepreneur herself) was recently killed in an automobile accident -clearly a tragic event that has changed me forever. As part of the healing process I'd like to share with you some of the valuable lessons I'm learning as both as a business owner and as a human being.

Being self employed, in my case as a micro business owner, can be one of the greatest freedoms imaginable. It's why many of us start businesses. We determine our own schedules, make rules that suit our lifestyle and

passions, generate revenue from our own efforts, and most importantly, are the creators of our own future. That is, until life happens - suddenly, the unimaginable happens and it all comes to a screeching halt and the flip side of being a micro business owner becomes painfully obvious.

If you stop working, no revenue is generated. If you don't answer email, the pile gets overwhelming fast. Pause your marketing efforts and your pipeline slows to a trickle. But, most of all, your customers rely on you to keep delivering the products and services you are there to deliver.

Paradoxically, it's a no brainer.

Something of this magnitude happens in your life and of course you stop. Everyone understands. There's plenty of encouragement and support to take the time you need. But it doesn't mean it's easy to do, in fact – it often adds more stress to an already tweaked situation.

The blessing in this difficult experience is the powerful reminder that behind every business is a life - **your** life. It's so easy to get caught up and forget that the health of your business is only as good as the health of its owner. Just as you need to have proper insurance coverage, if you

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sustain a loss of your physical property, you need to have proper life coverage to support you as well.

Here's a few things I'm learning you need in order to have and maintain the proper coverage to manage life as it shows up, as it often does, sometimes in very unexpected ways:

Insure a reserve of personal "energy equity". This point has to do with self care. Just as you need reserve funds in the bank to cover emergencies, you need to have reserves in your energy bank account to draw on when you need it. If you're always living on the edge you won't be able to weather extra stress very well. Even if you can only save the equivalent of \$5 a week - save it.

Cut yourself some slack. Give yourself permission to not be perfect. Many entrepreneurs feel they have to give 150% all the time. For example: With everything going on I agonized all week knowing I needed to get a newsletter out by the first of the month. Frankly, I couldn't imagine where I'd find the energy to write, let alone the inspiration. Never the less, it's a commitment I've made to myself that I wanted to honor.

At the eleventh hour I decided to cut myself some slack and simply reprint an article from my archives. As I stood in the shower feeling the relief of my decision wash over me, the title of this article popped into my mind. I knew in that moment it was OK either way. I had a choice. I could easily reprint an article or pull out the laptop and see what might flow.

Say yes to support. The most amazing part of this experience has been the onslaught of people from all corners of my world showing up and asking if they could do anything to help. In this particular circumstance it's sometimes hard to know what you need, let alone ask for it. Allowing yourself to be vulnerable teaches you to go with the natural flow of life instead of against it. It actually promotes healing and forward movement and, from what I can see now, provides a blessing for the people doing the supporting.

There are many opportunities in business to ask for and receive help, support or guidance. Begin practicing when the stakes are low, so when the stakes are high, in a time of crisis, you can save yourself some vital energy instead of over stressing yourself out.

In the next few days we fly to Santa Fe for her memorial service. For now, I'm going to take my own advice, cut myself some slack and return to the reality of what's happening in my life behind my business.

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Your Professional Image

Balance Self-Expression with Workplace Expectations

By Dan Woog

It would be nice to think that the outside package should be irrelevant to hireability. But the reality of the workplace is this: Without a makeover, some very qualified employees may never get the promotions they deserve. Others may not get hired at all.

Kali Evans-Raoul is trying to change that. An African American with experience as a cosmetic chemist, Evans-Raoul founded The Image Studios in 2000 after realizing the salon industry wasn't serving women like her. Her Chicago-based company now employs 10 people to help clients look, sound and act in ways tailored to their

particular career goals. Her staff — including a wardrobe consultant, hairstylist, image coach, and speech and language pathologist — helps clients gain positive notice from bosses and interviewers.

Self-Expression and Work

Looking professional does not mean selling out your cultural or ethnic heritage. Evans-Raoul helps her clients “balance self-expression with workplace realities.” Her goal is to get them to be true to themselves within the bounds of professional etiquette.

African American women often work in organizations where fellow employees rarely dress in ways that are significant to any specific heritage, Evans-Raoul explains. While a large Afro may be culturally significant and a prideful expression of individuality, extra-puffy hair may send a message that the wearer is “not in control” of herself, according to Evans-Raoul. The unanswered (and unasked) question becomes: “How can she control a project if she can't control her hairdo?”

Many African American women do not wear makeup, Evans-Raoul notes —

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it's not part of their culture. Yet others may perceive that as a lack of polish indicating an inability to perform at a higher level. And long, curved or glittery nails, while stylish at home, can distract a colleague or customer, preventing the wearer from being heard.

"Sometimes professional image development can be more challenging for women who are African American," Evans-Raoul says. "Our hair and makeup are outside professional fashion norms. It takes more consideration to make sure that hairstyle and color are not distracting."

Every Office Is Different

Personal-appearance coaches must consider a client's particular workplace or profession. A hemline that is considered risqué in one office

might be acceptable in another; a trendy outfit may be acceptable in an ad agency, but out-of-bounds in the law firm down the hall.

However, Evans-Raoul says, certain standards apply everywhere. Clothing should be "the best quality you can afford." Quality, she notes, is measured by fit and fabric, not just price.

Send the Right Message

But looking good gets you only so far. "African Americans must also focus on grammar, intonation and inflection," Evans-Raoul says. Speaking "office English" does not take away from one's cultural heritage, she insists. "Our abilities as individuals to be chameleon-like and have others feel comfortable with and around us is critical to our success. The degree to which we are successful depends very much on how well we fit in."

She uses the analogy of a famous brown uniform. "Nobody who works for UPS says 'I won't wear the uniform.' But when you go home, no one asks you to keep it on. It's self-sabotaging to think that looking the way you're supposed to look in your particular field means you're undermining your personal self." In the workplace, Evans-Raoul says, "you must always have your game face on. People constantly make split-second decisions about you. Most of the time those decisions have nothing to do with race; they're about the crispness and cleanness of your message, and the ability for them to see you without any distractions."

It's sometimes harder for minorities, who may have a particular sense of cultural style, to tread that line between self-expression and professional appearance. But the workplace is not a TV show. It's reality, and Evans-Raoul does her best to help clients land starring roles.

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Fear, Defensiveness, Relationships and Success

By Bud Bilanich

If you want to become interpersonally competent, you need to do three things. First, get to know yourself. Use this self knowledge to help you better understand and communicate with the other people in your life. Second, build solid, long lasting, mutually beneficial relationships with the people in your life. Third, resolve conflict positively and creatively. Use conflict as an opportunity to strengthen your relationships.

Sometimes, I find little nuggets in

fortune cookies that I reference. The other day, I came across a great one...

“When you feel defensive, examine what you fear.”

Quite a few of my articles on self confidence deal with fear. I believe that self confident people identify what they fear, and then take action to deal with that fear. This in turn, helps them become more self confident. In my talks and coaching sessions, I suggest that when you

find yourself procrastinating, figure out what scares you.

The fortune cookie quote above got me thinking about fear in a different light. Defensive behavior can destroy relationships. And when you think about it, defensive behavior is often brought on by fear — usually fear of rejection.

When you’re feeling defensive, you tend to do one of two things: 1) lash out at others, or 2) go into great detail explaining and rationalizing your actions and/or behavior. Both

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of these responses are ways of coping with rejection. "You can't reject me, I won't stand for it. In fact, I reject you. I'm angry." Or, you might take ten minutes explaining why you did something or acted in a particular way in hopes of getting the other person to accept, rather than reject your logic, action or behavior.

Either way, defensive behavior is not one of the hallmarks of interpersonally competent people. It gets in the way of building open, trusting relationships. Defensive behavior also tends to escalate, rather than resolve, conflict.

The common sense point here is clear. Successful people are interpersonally competent. Interpersonally competent people build strong relationships and resolve conflict in a positive manner. Defensive behavior hinders the development of strong relationships and tends to make conflict worse. Often we get defensive when our fear buttons get pressed — especially our fear of rejection. So, the next time you find yourself feeling or acting defensively, ask yourself "what am I afraid of here?" The answer will help you respond in an interpersonally competent manner and to build and maintain strong relationships.

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Diversity in Education

by Latashia Martin

Diversity is defined as a variety of something such as opinion, color, or style. It is a mixture of many things new and old. It is a way of having options and building intellect. When many hear diversity in regards to education, one automatically visions bilingual, different students in a school setting speaking different languages. According to the definition, the bilingual assumption is classified as diversity. However, diversity in education needs to incorporate more than just different students from different countries speaking different languages in order

to provide beneficial and realistic life skills.

A proper education gives a student the tools necessary to be successful in life. It provides the fundamentals of society and what is expected of a person within it. Authors of Education For The 'Era Of The Adult', recognize the "new" characteristics, such as knowledge and skill, that are no longer being taught in the classroom (Best and Eberhard, pp. 24). Today the times and economy is changing. The job market is shifting, and qualities that were once excellent for the markets and basic survival are now nowhere near well enough. In 2005 394,

282 United States adults were reentering school for a secondary education, with the most students being in Florida (U.S. Department of Education). Compared to the 1,009,706 adults that received a basic adult education, 394,282 may not seem like much. Though the statistics do not display whether the adults are reentering due to force by their employer or need for more skill, that is still a lot of adults needing to go back to school for career purposes. What the statistics do show is that the basics, such as math and science, no longer put a high school graduate on

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the top 10 list of qualified personnel. This means that new times call for new measures of adjustment, new theoretical approaches, and most importantly a new, diverse curriculum for our students.

A diverse education prepares students not only for the life of today but also tomorrow. It offers a wide array of specialties for a student to become fluent in. A diverse education allows students to put the information they learn and gather to use immediately. It teaches them to apply their knowledge on a broad and diverse platform. A diverse education promotes participation of its students. Thus, a diverse education is more beneficial to a student's success, after the completion of high school, than the traditional math, English, history and science curriculum. According to Fred best and Ray Eberhard, authors of Education For The 'Era Of The Adult', "Some 41% of the jobs in 2000 will be in higher-skilled occupations, compared with 24% in 1984. The job-skill requirements of the future will not only be higher, they will be different" (pp. 25). Though there is no exact way to predict the requirements the job market will instill in the future, we could attempt to make sure that our children are in some way prepared for the change. Diversity in an educational curriculum could prepare our children for this change and potentially eliminate the skill gap which currently requires more and more adults to reenter school for the changing job market.

Today's educational institutions should consist of a required diverse curriculum for all students in all schools. It should provide students with a well-rounded life enhancing experience. That is, it should provide options for classes other than the traditional four subject schedule. A diverse education should be comprised of music, theatre and drama, computer literacy, life skills, physical education, and language options other than Spanish. Today's educational institutions, like those in the past, need to be the foundation at which a child can obtain basic survival skills for life beyond high school.

Music in the classroom is something that has been around for many years now. Some schools implement classes such as band and chorus into their curriculum which are optional to the students. The students that choose to participate in the music classes' fine tune their vocals or become masters in playing instruments in these programs. Many of our most famous musicians and vocal artists started their careers while in schools participating in a musical program. Though obtaining a musical career

may be rare, these music programs have still provided the opportunity for some.

A new and emerging music program in the elementary classrooms is flocabulary. Flocabulary is a program that has been implemented in the teaching of English and history predominantly in the state of New York. It presents the lesson in a musical format which allows the students to relate to something that they enjoy while learning their school material. Students learning through flocabulary have displayed higher test scores and greater knowledge of the assigned material than students in traditional classroom settings. Though music is seen as a hobby, it is not an easy concept. For one to play an instrument they must know how to read and comprehend the music language in which notes are displayed on their music sheets. English is the class that teaches us to read and comprehend language. A musical curriculum would allow students to learn how to apply their language fundamentals in ways other than through writing or speaking.

Like music, art gives students the opportunity to expand their minds and creativity. According to scholars Ellen Winner and Lois Hetland, "Students who study the arts seriously are taught to see better, to envision, to persist, to be playful and learn from mistakes, to make critical judgments and justify such judgments," (Pogrebin). By including art as an option in a diverse curriculum, a school would be allowing students to mentally challenge their vision and perception of the things around them. In math, one is taught that everything is geometrical, the human anatomy, buildings, vehicles, etc. By incorporating art, school officials would be allowing students to apply the concepts of geometry into real life figures in which they can relate while learning to critique their own perceptions.

To some, music and art may seem to do nothing other than use unnecessary resources and school funding, as classes having no educational benefit. However, as of today, many schools have spent a generous amount of their budgets reorganizing the structure of the cafeteria and the food being served. With obesity in our children on the rise, tackling it has become a matter of interest in our schools. Although, while changing a diet and diminishing physical education is not going to tackle the issue of obesity. A nutrient rich diet with the incorporation of exercise would. Physical education classes allow students to exercise their bodies and to

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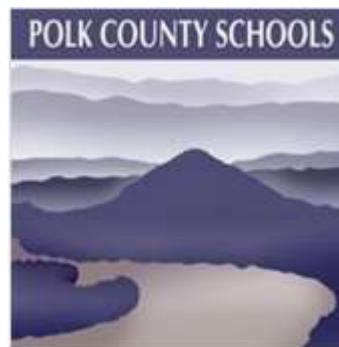
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mentally regroup from lectures in the classroom. In a study conducted on college students in December 2009, "The average length of time a student could concentrate for in lectures was 10 minutes" (Richardson). If adults in college are having a hard time focusing, than younger children would potentially have an even harder time. Now, while physical education has its health benefits, it also allows students to learn the concept of teamwork. Once one becomes employed, no matter their background, they will need to know how to work and operate in a team environment.

Corporations today focus their entire work productivity around team work and technology. With more and more uses of technology on the rise through phones and computers, one would think that school officials would incorporate a technological literacy program into their curriculum as well. The United States is the leader of technology in the world producing "some of the most important breakthrough products" in the technology sector (Kirkpatrick). Children today are enmeshed in social networking sites like facebook, twitter, and myspace with no concept of the role technology plays in society. They do not understand the importance of phone towers in conjunction with their home internet for the ability of internet use. There is no use in having our children knowing and understanding how to productively network without an understanding of how to use it to produce productive and rewarding careers. A technological literacy class would teach students about the basic fundamentals of computers. It would teach them proper research and handling methods which would result in the skills necessary for positions involving the use of modern day technology.

With the increase in immigration there has been an enormous amount of languages added to the American mixture. After English, Spanish is the most used language in the United States. Considering this phenomenon, many have chosen to take a liking to learning Spanish. Schools have implemented Spanish classes for the nonnative speakers. However, there are other cultures in the U.S. the need interpretation. We have people from Asian decent that cannot comprehend or speak English. We have people who speak a combination of French that have little representation. If everyone chooses to learn Spanish, which has become second nature, we will have a population of people that will not be able to get their voices heard. By requiring all of our students to learn Spanish we are again crippling our youth in terms of their

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future. Incorporating other languages like French or Cantonese as second language options would give our students greater qualities when looking for employment in the working world.

With the current economy, finding work is already a challenge. School officials should incorporate life skills training into their curriculum it would better prepare our students for the things employers are looking. Life skills classes would have to be constructed to fit the proper age group of the student population. This can be accomplished by proper lesson choices and an interactive classroom format such as group projects and mock sessions. Like skills classes should include sessions like relationship building, effective communication, proper budgeting and money management, proper resume and cover letter format, interview etiquette, establishing credit, etc. These life skills are basic survival skills that are going to be necessary no matter what a student chooses to do after they leave school. Through these life skills classes, school officials would be taking a stand on better the economy as well as society as a whole. Through life skills classes the students can further apply the lessons they are learning in their math classes to realistic situations.

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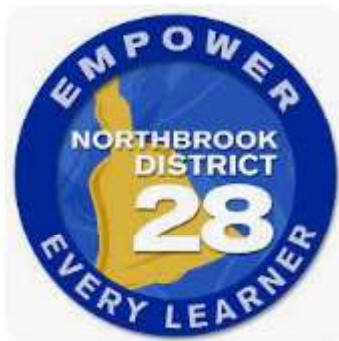


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The Problem With College and Career Readiness Education

By Gabriela Gotay

Preparing our children to be successful in college and once they step out into the workplace is certainly an educational goal worth striving for, but should college and career readiness be the ultimate goal of the traditional education system?

I am proof that focusing on college and career readiness can actually work. I graduated with high honors from both college and graduate school. I have a job and time to blog and come up with other fun ideas and projects. I have good communication skills, interpersonal skills, work with people and take on leadership roles.

However, when I think back and reflect about my years in primary and secondary school, I know there is so much information that is missing. For me, those first years of school seem to be a blur. I know I did receive some information, I know I was there at school, in a room with a teacher and other 20 or 30 students, I know I had the books and I also know, I was a very distracted girl, I know I did not like all they taught and felt no inspiration to learn. Nevertheless, I did the work, I got passing grades, and moved up from one grade to the next until I was “ready”.

Yes, many students reach a level of “college and career readiness”. But what

does that really mean? Even more worrisome, could that be the only goal that is worth it?

New schools and new teaching and learning models have been sprung up for years in different countries around the world. In the US these “avant-garde” schools are implementing many different approaches to teaching and learning. These schools are mostly private schools or public charter schools. Unfortunately, many of the students that need these schools the most, as they provide greater literacy reinforcement and a new source of inspiration to learn beyond the expected bottom line, are missing out.

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What happens when we forgo true mastery of skills, abilities and understanding for the quick and ready-made? When we don't allow the teaching and learning process enough flexibility and resources to provide individual attention to students and support to teachers? What happens when the aim of traditional schools continuous to be the mass production of "workers", giving just enough time, tools and strategies to grasp the very basic concepts and understanding to move on? The answer is simple and worrisome, where the original goal was to produce "useful and moral citizens" the reality is that we are producing nothing more than mediocre children.

Of course many students in traditional educational systems succeed. But shouldn't the aim be the success of ALL?

And what about this insistence on "college and career" as the next

obvious steps, or rather THE steps to take after graduating from high school?

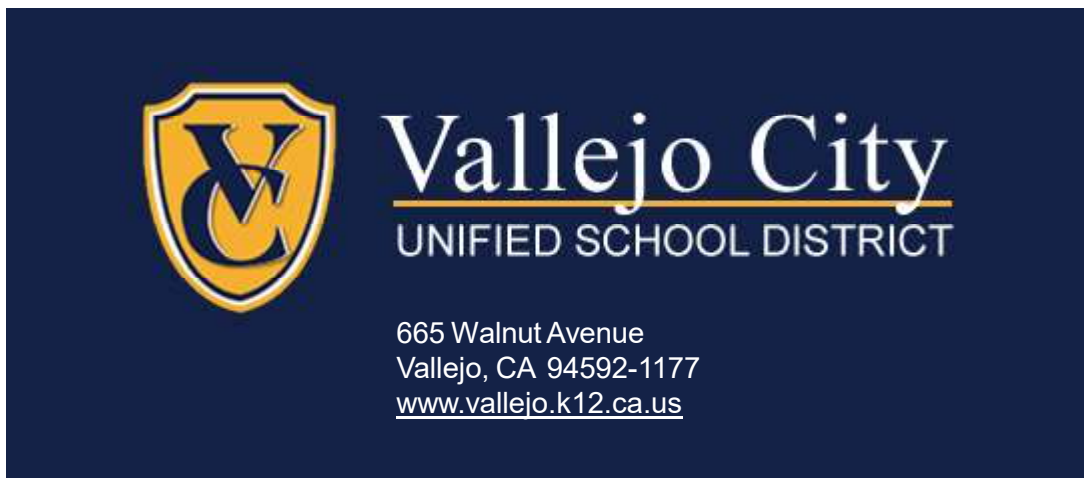
I did follow the very traditional path of college, marriage and career. As I look back and forward into the evolution of our human civilization, that traditional path is still very much ingrained in the way western culture has structured itself. Within society, many of us think we are doing what we want to do with our lives, but in reality, immersed in the traditional education systems, we have been programmed for years. Of course, at the time schools as we know them formally began, its main purpose was to develop rational and discipline citizens, men and women willing and able to follow society's rules and limitations that make everyday life possible. The school became a civilizing institution.

But, when the standards teachers work with emphasize "college and career readiness" we are telling young students that these are the only acceptable

options on the table for their future. I believe, that in a never ending quest to produce children that get into college and find jobs, schools have created massive mediocrity.

College: before our modern times, going to a higher institution of learning was not designed for everyone. Nowadays we have more than enough physical evidence that people that don't go to college can still be greatly successful. This success doesn't happen by accident, but by action and self-discipline. If students grow up and get educated in creative and innovative environments, who can tell how many useful technologies they may be able to come up with or what new ideas they may develop that change the way we live our lives in the coming future. At one time in our human history colleges may have been great places to share ideas and learn about a variety of topics not available to everybody else. Now, that

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is not necessarily true anymore. People around the world connect and share ideas by the second. The internet is all about information, connectivity and learning that takes place instantly. Many free courses are available online, all the books you could imagine to download and the forums for discussion of new ideas.

Career: this word doesn't mean a Job, not anymore. Now a career may be thought of as the path one entrepreneur takes along a line of innovative ideas, products and services. Now a career is not a life spent working for a company, performing exactly the skill, it says in your resume, you acquired in your college degree. The workplace has changed, and the role of a professional within it has also change. Social skills are needed in the workplace, yes, ability to follow rules and procedures, to work in teams, to manage time... but more and more offices and companies are revamping their organizational structure and what they expect employees to do. It's no longer a follow the leader, static environment. It is an ever changing and challenging place, where cultural awareness and diversity is the new norm, where each individual is expected to take on a leadership role, where working standing up is ergonomic and we are even having "walking" meetings.

Innovative educational models have come and go, the stronger ones have endured. But to get access to those, most parents still need to pay. While the public education systems of some states have taken positive steps forward, other are lingering behind, within the security of the states' educational standards and the CCS. Don't get me wrong, having a set of standards is useful in many ways. But the limiting expectation of college and career readiness may be doing more harm than good.

As valuable as is it to prepare children with the skills they will need to be useful and productive once they get out of school, it is also valuable to make the time they spend in school one of self-discovery, reflection, creativity and problem solving outside the box. Because, if children don't see themselves represented in other individual or self-made boxes outside the box of "college" and the box of "career", they will default to mediocrity. Supporting and building of the confidence of children is what opens up the path they will choose to travel no just toward college and career, but through life.

Let's prepare our children to be ready to face life's challenges and opportunities. Let's refrain from forcing "college" and "career" as the only two options and the only to reason that school is worth their time for. School, as a time and place, is so much more than that.

We Are Committed To Career Opportunities For All



CEDAR FALLS COMMUNITY SCHOOL DISTRICT

1002 West 1st Street
Cedar Falls, IA 50613-2299
www.cfschools.org

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Concord Feed & Fuel, Inc.
228 Hookston Road
Pleasant Hill, CA 94523

We are a contractor which does business with the government, and as such we are required to take affirmative action to ensure that equal opportunity is provided in all aspects of employment. We strongly encourage women, minorities, individuals with disabilities and veterans to apply to all of our job openings. We are an equal opportunity employer and all qualified applicants will receive consideration for employment without regard to race, color, religion, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, or national origin, age, disability status, Genetic Information & Testing, Family & Medical Leave, protected veteran status, or any other characteristic protected by law. We prohibit Retaliation against individuals who bring forth any complaint, orally or in writing, to the employer or the government. In order to comply with the various federal regulations. We invite applicants to voluntarily self-identify their gender, race, ethnicity, veteran status and if you have a disability and will not be used against you in anyway.

Somos contratistas que hacen negocios con el gobierno y, como tales, estamos obligados a tomar medidas afirmativas para garantizar la igualdad de oportunidades en todos los aspectos del empleo. Alentamos a las mujeres, las minorías, las personas con discapacidades y los veteranos a postularse a todas nuestras ofertas de trabajo. Somos un empleador con igualdad de oportunidades y todos los solicitantes calificados recibirán consideración para el empleo sin distinción de raza, color, religión, género, orientación sexual, identidad de género o nacionalidad, edad, estado de discapacidad, información y pruebas genéticas, licencia familiar y médica, estado de veterano protegido o cualquier otra característica protegida por la ley. Prohibimos las represalias contra las personas que presenten una queja, verbalmente o por escrito, ante el empleador o el gobierno. Para cumplir con las diversas reflexiones federales. Invitamos a los solicitantes a que voluntariamente identifiquen su género, raza, origen étnico, estado de veterano y si usted tiene una discapacidad y no será utilizado en su contra de ninguna manera.