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THE PARADOX OF EMOTION AND EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP
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Abstract:

Reporting on findings from two major empirical studies, involving teachers and principals, this paper breaks new ground in our understanding of school leadership. Exploring the emotionally charged nexus within which teachers' and leaders' domains of concern converge over career, students, school climate and their colleagues, this report reveals some new findings about the emotional realities of teaching and leading. Leaders are emotionally 'significant others' in teachers' lives. Leaders need more support in the emotional labour of their work. The potential in this professional relationship to provide much needed mutual support, remains seriously under-explored to date. This study points the way to the need for a closer examination of teachers' and leaders' needs, and their ability to support each other in their work in schools. The paradox of emotion and educational leadership is the dichotomy between the way leaders and teachers believe they must seem and the ways as highly functioning fully-dimensional human beings, they need to be. Emotional control is one thing. Emotional numbness is quite another.

A while ago, I bumped into a Dr. friend of mine at Women's College hospital, in Toronto, and we were chatting briefly, when he said,
"The last time I saw you, you were starting your doctoral studies, what topic did you decide on for your thesis?"
"The emotions of leadership," I replied, just a bit firmly.
"Oh that should be easy," he scoffed, "They don't have any! . . . at least, . . . they're not supposed to."

I am sure each of you is personally aware that leadership does involve emotion. Perhaps in that sense, you don't need me to tell you about 'emotion' and 'leadership' at all. Your experience of your own emotions, and those of the many others with whom you work in schools is evidence enough that in contrast to my friend's startling and important remark, emotion and leadership do very much, deserve to be considered hand in hand. But what gave me real pause in what my friend said to me, and what I think we do need to consider seriously together today, is the notion that leaders are "not supposed to" have emotions.

I would argue, that this is a paradox, the paradox of emotion and educational leadership. I believe there is a dichotomy between the way leaders and teachers believe they must seem and the ways as highly functioning multi-dimensional human beings, they need to be. After all, emotional control is one thing. But emotional numbness is quite another. As Andy Hargreaves (1997) has written, alluding to Fried's *The Passionate Teacher*, "Teaching and leading are profoundly emotional activities (Fried, 1995). Hargreaves cautions us, as he goes on to say, "You would not guess this from much of the educational change and reform literature, however. . . . If educational reformers ignore the emotional dimensions of educational change, emotions and feelings will only re-enter the change process by the back door (pp.108 –109)."

More than merely pesky interlopers, which interfere with the more highly valued rational processes in schools, emotions are actually always present, and as such are foundational to human experience.

From what leaders and teachers are telling me, being an educator involves a tremendous amount of emotion. However, in practice, the emotionality of teaching and leading is often, largely a matter of emotional control.

In a study involving principals from six different countries – Australia, New Zealand, The United States, Canada, England and Ireland – for six months, head teachers joined in an asynchronous online conversation. In this forum, they considered together many aspects of emotion and their work as leaders. The theme of emotional control was quick to emerge. Of paramount importance to ‘professionalism’ as many define it, is the need to be at all times, emotionally controlled, in effect, masked - our real, fully dimensional selves carefully hidden from view. . . and I quote one of your colleagues here:

While emotions are powerful, being professional usually means reducing emotional responses and working on listening openly and calmly. I need to work on this most days!

When our emotions are raging inside, no matter how calm an exterior we maintain, it is hard to listen, and even harder perhaps, to remain open.

Another head teacher offered this example of emotional control in her classroom.
And how do I stop showing my frustration when my exam class, two weeks before their final exam, still fail to do their homework? It sure makes me identify with my staff.

Both teachers and leaders do an awful lot of managing of their own emotions every day. And when we begin to think about the added importance and expended energy in trying to manage the emotions of others, suddenly the emotional dimension of leadership begins to take its rightful place in our considerations. Inherently, leadership is emotional work. In so far as it is work for which they are paid, it can also be referred to as emotional labour (Hochschild, 1983).

For example quoting again

I have caught myself in an emotional turmoil on occasion. Not so much displaying verbal discontent, but utilizing body language that would indicate that I was not impressed with the situation. I am trying to alter that reaction as I feel that I need to remain calm & poised in all situations. I'm still pondering this & no doubt I'll come back to it in the future.

Another principal remarked,

-about hiding frustration. Isn't it something we all do - hide emotion and appear "professional" and "detached"? And isn't it good practice to be emotionally detached in situations such as child abuse, if only to protect ourselves psychologically?

Achieving a degree of professional detachment for leaders’ own psychological protection is a good reason to be emotionally controlled. But as this leader has most succinctly stated, there are dangers.

.. . being in this mode, if taken too far so that it becomes the commonplace response, is to be a "Manager" and not a Leader.

“Taken too far”, emotional numbness can relegate the job of a leader to that of a mere manager, someone who is just trying to cope and orchestrate the variables, someone who is just trying to survive.

Yet, management of all the details and processes in organization is important. It is a big part of leadership. Emotional management places perhaps the greatest drain on the leader’s energies. However, attending to the perpetual management of one’s own emotions, when it creates incongruities within the self can be taxing and even bad for your health.

The unquestioned premise in the tacit imperative that to “be professional” is synonymous with seeming unemotional contains the paradox. It is not that professionalism addresses whether or not we are actually feeling emotion. This, like the emotions themselves is assiduously avoided.

Greenberg and Paivio,(1997, p.57-58) in *Working with Emotions in Psychotherapy*, point out the dangerous, and health threatening properties of avoiding emotions.

Feelings enhance our capacity to cope and, once accepted, can better be coped with themselves. Their avoidance, on the other hand, leaves us doubly deficient. First, the adaptive information is neglected, leaving us disoriented. Second, the avoidance fails to make the feelings and their effects disappear. Rather, it leaves us incongruent, with our feelings, thoughts, and actions in disharmony. . . . This impedes our ability to cope, to act on our emotions effectively, for we are unable to assert our boundaries or seek comfort. People who chronically avoid feelings no longer automatically attend to the felt referents of their experience, [they] do not symbolize emotions in awareness, and are unable to create new felt meanings and promote action relevant to their well-being. Once feeling is blocked people are unable to carry forward their experience to the next step. Rather, they remain in a state of continued avoidance.

Sounds a bit like the frog in the boiling water doesn't it? (Senge,1990) You know this one. (I can't imagine the mind that designed the experiment but anyway,) if you throw a frog into a deep kettle of boiling water, it has the where-with-all to leap out and save itself. But if you put the frog in a kettle of cool water, and gradually bring the water to the boil, the frog does not choose to jump out; it doesn't even experience alarm, until it is too late. The frog, presumably has become numb. Significantly the frog has also become dead.

1. Avoidance
2. Loss of adaptive information
3. Feelings and effects remain
4. Self becomes incongruent with feelings thoughts and actions in disharmony.

These lead to

5. Loss of ability to act on emotions, effectively asserting boundaries and seeking comfort.
6. Loss of ability to promote action relevant to their well-being.
7. Remaining in state of continued avoidance.

Sound familiar?

I'm not a psychiatrist, but that doesn't sound healthy to me, and systemic avoidance of what people are really feeling is what goes on, every day in schools. However, this may be an essential factor in retaining the 'status quo' in organizations. Consider the possibility that in all our keenness to address the need for change and to bring about changes in our schools, we need to take a look at the contributing factors to stasis. I am arguing that emotional avoidance is one of them.

Diamond (1993) in his *The Unconscious Life of Organizations* writes the following: *Typically, in organizations, people suppress ideas and feelings about ongoing problems at work, behavior often viewed as politically useful and adaptive. Paradoxically, successful efforts at organizational change and development rely upon participants' genuine expression of feelings and ideas. Nevertheless, sincerity may challenge the political nature and defensive strategies that characterize most work relationships. Resistance to change is therefore inevitable.* (Diamond, 1993, p.117).

No doubt there is a connection between the emotional avoidance in practice and the same absence of emotion in research and theories of educational leadership. Emotions are messy. They're unpredictable. You can't be guaranteed they will 'co-operate.' They're hard to measure and harder to get a hold of. Just as you recognize them they metamorphosize in the seamless blend of thinking and feeling that is the human mind (Damasio:1997). They can be but are not are not easily co-opted. I would argue that the willingness of individuals to allow their real emotional energies to be subverted is the essential self-perpetuating mechanism of what Weber calls the "Iron Cage" of organizational bureaucracy.

Surrendering this fundamental aspect of who we are seems self-defeating. So why do we do it? Ironically, it may be to preserve a sense of “personal freedom.” Stephen Fineman (1993,1996: 24) suggests that organizations give us “ an illusion of realness and permanence in the face of an unconscious fear that everything is fleeting, fragile and meaningless (Becker, 1973, 1975). . . . we need desperately to ensure the survival of the organization and our place in it, [and] in so doing [we are] preserving a semblance of personal freedom.” We seek freedom from deeper seated “elemental fears and anxieties.” Again, the emotions define us and shape us, as we pursue this semblance of freedom.

However, understanding emotion in organizations and in leadership may help us achieve real rather than simulated personal freedoms. Instead, every day in schools, people feel anything but ‘free’ as they reconfirm the subordination of emotion to a more highly positioned ‘rational’ purpose . (As Cyril Connolly wrote, “The man who is master of his passions is Reason’s slave.) The supremacy of rationalistic appearances is ritually reasserted in our unquestioned acceptance of hierarchy. Emotional displays are associated with weakness, emotional control with strength. Another of your colleagues describes this phenomenon as it pertains to administrators:

Reading through this very high powered conference has made me very open. I'm usually much more guarded about sharing my thoughts in written words. It's the self preservation thing....we heads can't be seen to be weak, vulnerable or out of control.

The need for emotional control is an inescapable and sensible part of school life.

In my second week I was brought back from a meeting due to the school literally rioting. They were running amok round the school with staff just standing watching. My ‘dht’ & myself went into the school and regained control then set about stabilizing the school. My emotions at the time were running really high - I'll admit to feeling absolutely terrified in case my actions made things worse and the school didn't get back under control. I'd never experienced anything like it in almost 20 years of teaching and don't want to again. Whilst battling with my fears outwardly I had to remain calm and in control

There is no doubt that emotional control is an essential part of the leader’s job. Emotional numbness however, which is something else again, can be debilitating.

As individuals in organizations we allow the stream of our emotional energies to be co-opted, into the larger organizational mechanism. This may or may not occur consciously, but it does occur. I am using two very different images here, and I do so deliberately. There is a living stream of energy flowing through each of us. When we gather, in small and large groups our energies come together too, in various pleasurable, satisfying as well as disturbing ways. Some organizations co-opt our living energies, by requiring us to numb their essential survival value, the emotional dimension that keeps us in tune with our surroundings.

If we experience our organizations and think of them as machines, perhaps this helps to account for our willingness to become reduced to mere parts of an emotionally repressed, if frenetically active, whole. So often we think and speak about our lives in schools in mechanistic, even militaristic ways: cogs in the wheels, sticks in the spokes, front lines, chalk face, under siege, best defense, damage control, drop the bomb etc. (I am grateful to Dr. Lynn Beck for reminding me of the power of language to shape our responses and define our perceptions of ourselves and each other in schools, and elsewhere. Yiannis Gabriel (1993 in Fineman, 1993,1996) also adds to our understanding of the power of metaphor in organizations (see also, Hochschild in Fineman,1993, 1996).

Language has emotional power. Our use of language can contribute to the prevention or the creation of possibility. Militaristic and mechanistic language is by definition, dehumanizing, designed to assist us in numbing the pain of destruction and suffering that are the unfortunate necessities of victory in war. While we may wish sometimes that schools would run more like machines, and, while schools may sometimes feel like battlefields, they are not machines, and this is not a war. And, I would argue, that we can no longer afford the reduction of our learning communities to mere machinations and military manoeuvres - by our compliance and subconscious replications of these things - without profoundly compromising our human potential both individually and collectively.

Am I advocating emotional abandon, chaos? No. Am I advocating a reexamination of wasted potential by recouping lost energies and accessing new energy sources through greater emotional authenticity? Yes.

Perhaps school leaders need to begin to concern themselves less with running 'tight ships' and more with creating 'tightly knit communities.'

The incongruities of modern life are tapping the strength of our species, the strength we need, quite literally, to survive. Modern organizations are major contributors to this phenomenon, and those who blindly subscribe to their ethic of de-emotionalization, are unwittingly contributing to unsustainability, in the very organizations where we are quite literally 'spending' our lives. These are the very places from whence the creative solutions to urgent, globally complex problems need to emerge.

Schools, are not 'just like businesses,' any more than they are 'just like machines,' and in their role as nurturers of the minds of tomorrow they are very special places deserving very special and perhaps in some ways, unique consideration. In this sense then, educational leaders, are perhaps the most important leaders in our entire society.

How does de-emotionalizing our interactions play out in leaders' day-to-day lives? Fineman powerfully captures this phenomenon in his book, *Emotion in Organizations* (1993: 31). He helps us see that organizations are actually "emotional arenas"

The boss takes unilateral action on resource allocation rather than face the anxieties of all involved; the policy group decides to divide the annual budget by departmental size – rather than voice their feelings of envy or anger to one another. If social defenses prevail, the organization can resemble a mini-society where personal risk is minimized, and creativity is near zero. The extreme is a form of corporate madness, where people are motivated to ignore warning signs that something is going wrong (De Board, 1978). (Fineman, 1993,1996: 28)

However, to embrace the emotional realities of our lives in schools requires us to acknowledge relationship and real relationship requires authenticity. No wonder it is often easier just to 'manage' and orchestrate. It may indeed release energy to acknowledge emotion, but it also requires energy and time, which are already in very short supply. This is another of the contradictions in educational leadership. To do it well we have to have the time and energy. To find the time and energy we have to do it well.

In the other study from which I want to draw upon today, 53 teachers described emotionally positive and emotionally negative interactions with their administrators. In this study a different image of 'professionalism' in leadership emerges.

There was an all pervasive feeling in that school that he knew what you were about. He did it in very small ways. It could be a smile. It could be a note in your mailbox. It could be a chat over coffee. Somehow he conveyed it. He was very professional.

The sense of being known, assists us in quelling the existential anxieties with which we all contend. Organizations provide places for relationship. But within organizations, the demands of authentic relationship go largely unfulfilled. More often we settle for what Hargreaves (1994) calls “contrived collegiality”.

In the name of collegiality leaders dig deep in order to make emotional projections of an organizational ‘self’ that seems to suit each situation. In these endeavours not only are leaders’ own emotions necessarily controlled and often masked, but also other more “appropriate” emotions must be generated, summoned from somewhere within, in the name of higher purposes. Leaders so often are trying to be all things to all people, at all times. This is the stuff of what Arlie Hochschild calls “emotional labour”. In her preface to Fineman’s book, she writes: “. . . *emotional labour includes knowing about, and assessing as well as managing emotions, other people’s as well as one’s own. . . . Managers infer the corresponding emotional boundaries between the right and wrong way to feel in a range of contexts – both those of others and of themselves [deciding] . . . which feelings seem ‘healthy’ and which seem ‘sick.’*” As Wendy Parkin has noted (Fineman, 1993: x-xi).

One of the participants in my principals study asked for help on this:
Where I find it difficult is in letting my own frustrations show - often my office seems like the receptacle of all the day's woes, and very few stop to ask/notice what I might be doing. I know that I should say (in management speak) 'Clear off. Now isn't convenient', but there's always a worry that you'll miss something crucial. And, honestly, that I'll fail to be the approachable 'open door person' I am by nature. The anger is very rarely more than transitory and I know that most people never see it. Is there a formula for getting this right?!

.....
Being able to call upon sufficient emotional intensity to ‘sell’ the vision was this leader’s example of the necessity to generate emotion:

By its very nature a Vision cannot be mechanistic and the result of learning skills. It is the emotional (spiritual?) response of the Leader to the situation of the Establishment. It is useless unless "sold" to colleagues and it is through the emotions, and not by learned skills, that we pass on our vision.

In families, in classrooms, in organizations, and in the principal’s office, some seem to do more emotional labour than others:

From New Zealand:
The question of emotions is an intriguing one because I have noticed that they are not applied democratically within organisations , not everyone is given the same right to shared sympathy and celebration. Some seem to be entitled to buckets of tears and cuddles , while others are deemed to suffice with a quick " tut, tut' . . .
[continuing later on in this example,]
My [niece] died suddenly and unexpectedly last Sunday, and her mother (my sister) is in the last stages of cancer. Colleagues response? Wow. Bad luck. We need 40 people to attend the next principals event so if you're not at a funeral, we want you to make up the numbers. Staff response when I get back - how are you coping? - did you know that So- and -So had a scrap while you were away and something needs to be done. I'm sure So- and So deliberately planned that act of

sabotage! Term 4 is not a good time to start grieving. Too many people depending on you to keep a clear head, provide the jobs that each wants and to keep them all informed, at the same time.

In organizations, emotions are not expected to be shared evenly.

When leaders find a balance, seek out and receive the necessary support and develop critical relationships, leadership, as you know, can be so much more than management. But the daily round of questions and crises, dilemmas and demands takes a toll, leaving little room for creativity and adventures in leadership. This is largely because educational leadership, as it has been traditionally conceived and practiced, can be so emotionally laborious.

Finding ways to cut down on unnecessary emotional labour by seeking out and creating congruity for the leader's 'self' may be a valuable avenue for re-channelling, and recouping energy that is otherwise lost. From the findings in my studies, this is an area that remains seriously underexplored. The teacher leader relationship is defining of school climate, and thus it becomes the emotional 'air we breathe' in schools. Although teachers and leaders may seem sometimes to be on opposite sides of the fence, and do perceive their roles quite differently, there is tremendous potential for the leader who can create alignment with teacher colleagues through better, as Norman Denzin (1984) calls it, 'emotional understanding.'

David Loader, one of your Australian colleagues, in his book *The Inner Principal*, (1997) which I highly recommend to you, reminds us that *Leadership has its highs and lows, its successes and failures. Principals cry, laugh, dream and become suspicious. There are times when principals do want the fairy godmother to come and save them. While leadership is about courage, about creating the tomorrow of our choice, heroism does not come easily.* (ibid, 1997, p.3)

Loader's candor about his personal and professional self is exceptional in educational administration literature.

Criticisms of my school were taken personally, as criticisms of me. With this mind set it became very hard to have a private life. . . . My personal failure was that I had no sense of myself as separate from the institution. (ibid, p.147)

Principals in the online study also spoke of highs and lows.

My emotional moments this last week? Prize giving, being so proud of our marvelous graduates who are leaving us after 5 great years. Saying a public farewell to my Deputy who is a top man, and who got a spontaneous standing ovation. And paying a tribute in my speech also to our Property Supervisor who has resigned last month because he is dying of a rapid, invasive brain cancer. That he has been a friend as well makes it harder. While I feel responsible for being cheerful and positive in this neat school, I thank heavens I have a family life that is loving and supportive. How do the unmarried, childless principals manage?

Another principal offered-

Together we formed our mission statement. 4 years on we revisited the statement to see if it still rang true. It was tweaked and re-approved. How did I feel? An absolute sense of elation when the things that were hot for me were also the hot issues for them. .should I say OUR hot issues. And all that from open questions. It's not a once every 4 year revelation....it's ongoing ...we live the model everyday. My aim is towards a learning organisation. A place where children and adults all want to learn more ..and that definitely includes me!!! Now 2 years after our last vision day we're going to find out how everyone thinks we're doing:parents, children, staff, governors. Data will be collected

and analysed and fed into our development plans. This is the part of the job I love. The strategic plans and making it all happen

If the voice of real feeling is shared, in what I would call ‘strategic authenticity,’ the powerful synergy in finding together, “our hot issues” can be transformational. However, in many schools, few people – neither teachers, nor the leaders themselves- believe their ‘hot issues’ are admissible to the organizational discourse. On the contrary, there is often a tacit prohibition of real feeling and truth telling, which is a function of the imperative to present an unruffled, unaffected exterior. Thus people in organizations ‘go along’ for the most part, presenting themselves as if they have no burning issues, as a way of continually demonstrating their membership in the organization. Those who speak their minds, and say what they (and even what many others) are really thinking, are often marginalized. Whereas those who can mask real feelings and pay lip service to the status quo are often earmarked as ‘leadership material’ (Campbell, 1994; Ferguson, -- -). Research by (Marshall and Greenfield, 1987) into the enculturation processes for educational leadership reveals that in order to be promoted, candidates must demonstrate this qualifying characteristic. Thus the system may even be ‘selecting out’ those leaders who might be most likely to catalyze organizational change.

When administrators subvert their own cognitive and emotional responses, (and their own personal needs,) in deference to an unrecognized imperative of compliance and control, they contribute to a culture of silence about the things that people really feel. The silence of unspoken convictions often takes the form of resigned acquiescence, and simply reinforces the prohibition of authenticity. Whereas, real change is deep change and this requires transformation. Authentic exchanges of information and emotion are essential if people in schools are to co-participate in creating something better, and something new.

Further symptomatic of the silence syndrome is the fact that it is so rare for leader’s needs – to be even considered. Instead, there is always more need ‘out there’ than anyone could ever handle. Leaders are often left holding the emotional baggage of others, with no time or encouragement to consider their own.

I could use the metaphor of a conductor who makes great music with his orchestra. He is one of them and yet alone. He does the whipping into shape, pushes individuals as far as they can/will go, helps this group of individuals produce something where the sum is greater than all of its parts. He takes the bow, acknowledges his colleagues. He is one of them. Yet he is not. Isn't that one of the challenges of being a leader - dealing with isolation and loneliness.

Must the administrator suffer alone, and in silence? It would seem natural for leaders to turn to each other for support. And principals in the online leadership conversation group in my study take some comfort and sustenance from being together in a safe environment where they could support each other and be themselves.

I am able to disclose things about myself that I can't in any other forum (real or virtual). It's about being anonymous and feeling supported by fellow practitioners...even though some of them are on the other side of the world. This is a place where I can share problems, feelings, concerns and celebrations without judgement from others.....good honest to goodness support. Criticism without the judgement. It reinforces what a complicated job we have and do. Headship can be a lonely job. It's good to have soul mates. It makes me question my practice, my feelings and leadership itself. It allows me to look in on myself...a luxury not usually allowed due to my constantly thinking

about others and their needs: colleagues, employees, pupils, parents, gobs and of course family.

I've been crowing about my involvement in this conference to loads of would-be ICT users. (Only about its application and power....not about the content!!!!!!) I look forward to it carrying on. I love reading others' contributions, the probes and guides from you Brenda and adding my own thoughts (in a small way). I wish I had more time to write more.....

_____ is so right. At the beginning I found it difficult to find time; now it's a 'treat' to get on line. The conversations have made me reflect so much more, consider my approaches, applaud my colleagues on-line, wherever they are.

I've mentioned this forum, although not its contents, and the majority response has been 'how do you find the time?' Now I know I need to find the time.

Leaders need to find the time to get the support they need. However, face-to face principals' groups within a local area are not always encouraged, possible, or even advisable. In Jill Blackmore's (1996) study, a group of female principals, who were in a system in the throes of severe fiscal restraint and aggressive educational reform in Australia, were heading up schools in fairly close proximity to one another. They had formed a kind of support system, whereby they could turn to each other with questions and air their concerns, even just let off a bit of steam from time to time. When the fiscal reforms put the three schools in direct competition for students and for funds - these principals were no longer able to afford to be candid with each other. Little glitches, and deep concerns alike, became vulnerabilities they could not afford to show. The isolation and deprivation was taking a toll, upping the ante and lowering their chances of achieving emotional balance in their work.

With all of the pressures and imperatives for change and reform, education is becoming a high stakes gamble for the personal wellness of its teachers and its leaders. These days, in all of the countries participating in the studies I am drawing from, aggressive educational reform and increased demands for accountability have raised the bar for students, teachers, and administrators alike. In some cases, schools can lose their funding; in others, teachers can lose their licences; and still others administrators have become vulnerable to sudden firing. Under the various accountability schemes designed to improve education, the pressure is mounting, and fear is a constant companion.

Yet studies show that we need sufficient security and safety – lack of fear - in order to take creative risks, and we need to take creative risks in order to learn. The emotional viability of such a scheme is questionable: 1) Increase the pressure; 2) Destroy conditions for creativity; and then 3) Demand collaborative cultures to form in order prevent added pressure. This construct reflects engineering that is utterly detached from what we know about teaching, learning and collaborating. Instead, it leaves teachers and leaders caught in a reinforcing spiral of cause and effect that can only be destructive. The pressure cripples the creativity and the crippled creativity increases the pressure. In effect, there is a reinforcing spiral here, which only the authentic leader can, recognize and help to overcome.

The emotional realities of many accountability initiatives are fundamental to the phenomenon of demoralization in today's schools. Meanwhile, there is the expectation that schools will become collaborative, learning organizations, cultures of cooperation and heterarchical decisionmaking. To do the work expected of them, people in schools must come together in trusting open relationships. Trust and authentic collaboration are fundamentally emotional. The emotions of creativity and cooperation exist in the same domain and you simply can't legislate that.

In a study by Blase and Blase (1997), we find that principals who were mandated to implement shared governance and distributed leadership in their schools, discovered it was hard to “let go” of control. Principals did report emotional and professional rewards for themselves and their teachers, when they were successful in this. However, the anxiety and fear that accompanied making the adjustment held them back, and in some cases completely undermined their ability even to try to make the necessary changes.

The rhetoric of collaboration and shared decision making sounds great. The emotional realities, especially for leaders are quite another matter. Unexamined for its emotional underpinnings, it is unlikely the discrepancy between the ‘walk’ and the ‘talk’ will make much progress. Leaders need support in facing their fears and moving toward what they sense as danger in possible loss of control (Maurer, 1995). Nevertheless, this they must do, if they are to learn to let go.

Leaders who are lacking an understanding of their own fears, can inadvertently create a culture of fear in their schools. Yet, as Bolman and Deal (1995, p. 56) have argued, “ *Organizations and institutions suffer and sputter when we ask too much of our leaders and too little of ourselves. Effective leadership is a relationship rooted in the community. Successful leaders embody their group’s most precious values and beliefs. Their ability to lead emerges from the strength and sustenance of those around them.*”

There is more to ‘relationship’ and ‘community’ though, than finding ourselves in the same ‘domain of convergence.’ Schools are places where people intersect, but do not necessarily ‘meet.’ Observing the rules of the organizational road, many individuals deliberately steer clear of each other, to avoid collision. However, unlike cars turning at a traffic light, to be successful, to share in their domains of concern, people in schools must make contact.

[time constraints determine whether or not to include this story]

I had an opportunity very early in life to learn some lessons about making contact.

Domains of Convergence:

A story

When I was a child of 11 or 12, every Saturday I would to the 3C ranch, a riding school of sorts, where, on a good day, in exchange for three dollars and a donation of labour - mucking out stalls, cleaning tack and grooming horses - I would get a chance to ride one of these noble beasts for a half an hour or so . I had been going to the three C ranch for some time getting a few moments on the pinto work horse, or the arthritic thoroughbred chestnut who walked and trotted gingerly, but was never too keen to canter. These were very quiet, very measured steps of total composure. The horses knew that they had everything under control and I shared eagerly in this delusion.

Then one day I noticed another horse. She was a lively little jet black mare, about 15:2 hands high and she loved to go. When the older children rode her it looked like another kind of experience altogether than the one I had been having, endlessly circling the manure pile at a hot, sticky, fly ridden walk and trot, nudging the sluggish sides of my reluctant mounts. They, on the other hand, would gallop through the fields, the little black’s coat, all asheen in the sunlight, her stylish mane and tail flashing in the wind. It must have felt like flying. At least so I imagined. Her name, was Echo.

Months passed, and then one bright, crisp winter morning, I summoned the nerve to inquire if I might ride Echo. The instructor was not about, and the older children had been left unofficially ‘in charge’. With an almost imperceptible glance at one another, two of the ‘middle manager,’ types, much more experienced riders than I , agreed that this could be arranged. Echo was already saddled. She never seemed to be resting. She never seemed to be tired. But one of them suggested she be taken for a bit of a run before I hopped on. So, she was taken once or twice around the field, with the glint of her freshly shod hooves flashing in the sunlight, and then she was mine.

“You’d better wear a riding cap. Have you got one?” I did. And I quickly retrieved it from my kit, eagerly mounting the black, never considering for a moment, that I had not yet been taught, to

canter.

“What’s she like? “ I dared to inquire.

“Oh she’s very smooth. You’ll love her canter. It’s just like being in a rocking chair.”

I can almost taste the excitement of anticipation that I felt that day as Echo and I moved off from the group, and she popped into an easy trot.

“Oh, by the way, she tends to buck sometimes, . . . at the canter. Be careful,” called the more conscience-bound one of the two. I didn’t want anything to take the shine off of my golden moment, so I chose to believe this would not be one of Echo’s bucking days. We trotted off scuffing silently through the light cover of fresh snow, and I was happy.

Before I knew it Echo was cantering. It felt wonderful. This was what I had been waiting for. This was bliss. . . . Echo and I were moving in harmony - ten or twelve, fifteen, maybe twenty delicious, elegant, effortless strides, away from the barn, up over the little hill, out onto the sun filled fields of snow. Then, suddenly, I felt something different, irregular, a break in her rhythm, and as if by magic, I was up, up weightlessly rolling forward in the air above Echo’s head.

‘ Thunk.’

Silence.

Then a dark, rich, thickness was all around me. . . .

Echo had bucked.

I recall vividly, the inverted image of my fleeing steed, cavorting toward the barn, almost laughing as she shook her head and flourished her tail, sending great clods of snow flying in her gleeful wake. The gallery looked none too surprised, as I tried to extricate my head from my chest. I must have looked quite comical planted there so solidly, ‘ass over teakettle’ sprawled in the snow. I felt humiliated. I felt hurt. I felt betrayed.

“3 Cs” were branded into my brain that day, along with an “Echo.” We all have our own personal ‘Echos’, reverberations from the experiences of our youth. So much of deep learning is painful. And sadly, too often deep learning takes a good swift smack in the head. Most often deep learning takes time, time to make the connections, and sense the meaning in the reverberations, the ‘echos’ in our hearts and minds. Teachers and leaders will ‘buck’ if they feel they are being exploited, rather than responding to the authentic mutuality of relationship. “Three C’s” that I have eventually learned from the ‘Echos’ of my experience are as follows:

1) The first is convergence . . . and congruity.

Echo and I had indeed converged that day. We were enjoying the same glorious morning, the same crisp cold, but our two experiences and purposes were definitely not congruent.

2) The second is the courage . . . to be counterintuitive

Human fears, needs and desires define us in obvious and hidden ways. Deep down, I no doubt feared I was not ready . . . to ride Echo. But my desire to do so prevented me from facing that fear. I would have needed to be counterintuitive, which, had good sense prevailed, would have ‘endangered’ my adventure. Moving toward that danger (Maurer, 1995), and its attendant, the fear, would have been counterintuitive. It would also have been highly recommended.

3) The third is commitment . . . to connectedness

I realize now, that while Echo and I had converged on the same sunny Saturday, in the same riding school, we were not in any way committed to each other. We were not even connected. We had no relationship.

In riding, as in life in general, and so it is in teaching and leading in schools, emotion matters.]

A real commitment to relationship requires, among other things creating a living history together, and as that history is accomplished, potentially, establishing a connectedness that is reaffirmed in reliability, accountability, and an alignment of memories about how people treat us and how they make us feel – a truing up of ‘the books,’ ‘the records’ as it were – that can build a sense of trust and safety, a feeling of security about the way things are, and, over time, the way one may come to expect that things will be.

Three pairs of key concepts emerge from what 53 teachers said about their memories of emotionally significant encounters with their administrators.

- 1) Convergence . . . and congruity;
- 2) the Courage to move Counterintuitively toward the danger; and
- 3) the Commitment to Connectedness,

Key Concepts

The necessity of Convergence. . . and Congruence.

Being in the same place and time is not enough. There must also be the “emotional understanding,” (Denzin, 1984) that comes of appreciating each others’ needs, interests and goals. In our schools, students, teachers and leaders converge in the same space in the same time, every day. On the surface of things they share a common purpose, an apparent congruity in their shared concern for their students’ education. However, looking beneath the surface, through the lens of emotion, we see a picture of teachers and administrators with somewhat conflicting points of departure on ‘school’, and yet perhaps very similar feelings about having anyone “interfere with their [idea of] education”[emphasis added]. Despite the proximity and obvious ‘convergence’ in their reasons for being there, my study of teachers and leaders suggests that their actual domains of foremost concern are quite different. These findings suggest that teachers and leaders remain to each other, relatively “Unknown Citizens.”(Auden, 1940). And when teachers and leaders don’t appreciate and speak openly with each other about their differing perspectives, clashes of incongruity are inevitable. This is one of the emotional invisibilities in schools. Potentially an important source of mutual support, teachers and leaders need to get to know more about each other and their respective domains of concern.

In the study of 50 teachers’ 100 stories of emotionally positive and negative experiences with school leaders, patterns emerged. Career was an important consideration across these stories.

Career

One in every three teacher recalled experiences with a leader concerned career. From the positive emotions data, ‘career’ outdistanced all other categories by a clear 25%. These memories involved getting and keeping a job, having opportunities and encouragement for professional development and being held in high esteem in general as an effective and empowered professional. The teachers in this study reported that these encounters had affected self-esteem, attitude, decisions and experiences of all kinds. Some had felt the impact throughout their careers, on their professional self-image and professional performance: “ she showed the confidence in me I didn’t have in myself” (7); “ the thing is they believe in the teacher. . . And I thought that had a really good positive impact on me. And this is why you do more. . . but then you have the principal that you feel you’re limited, or you feel that you have difficulty to work with . . . then it stops.”(52)

Teachers’ careers are vulnerable to the actions and inactions, the attitudes and approaches of their leaders.

When teachers and leaders converge in this highly sensitive zone of concern for the teacher, leaders are in tender territory. For instance, one teacher chose as her positive emotion scenario, her principal’s taking the trouble upon his retirement, to offer her an apology and an admission that he had made a mistake in not promoting her to head years and years before. (15) Long standing disappointment and self doubt were addressed and the possibility for repair to self-esteem was created. Her husband suggested that his apology and a quarter might buy a telephone call, but the teacher reported attaching much more value to the exchange:“ That made me feel really good that he did realize there was a mistake made. . . . He didn’t have to say that to me, you know. I think it took a lot for him to admit that and I think that said a lot about him and it made me feel really good.” The principal, having been willing to ‘move toward the danger’ (Maurer, 1995) of his own discomfort, and in his willingness to share his real feelings about that decision, had made a difference in her experience of him, her work and herself.

Sometimes, when a teacher's expectations of a leader are not met, lifetime plans are changed, the teacher's 'self' is affected and there is real fallout. When leaders harm their belief in their professional selves, some teachers withdraw, from their leaders, from their career plans and from their hopes for an exciting and inviting future in the profession. Others get angry and leave teaching altogether. Still others learn to keep their heads down, (Blase and Anderson, 1995) and studiously avoid 'the administration.' (27)(35) (36). One might argue that in so doing they may become "emotionally disconnected" (Pollack, 2000 p.174) from a potentially vital relationship in their working lives.

The administrator can have a powerful, direct and indirect influence on the growth and development of each teacher. By both commission and omission, perhaps more than any other adult in the school system, the school leader can alter the trajectory of a teacher's professional path. From a school wide perspective, the teacher who is, through painful, even poorly understood emotional encounters, disenfranchised or self-silenced in the discourse of the school is a lost voice. Marginalization and inclusion of teachers' voices in the evolution of a school's culture is within the scope of the principal's power. Confidence-building and shattering interactions can create or destroy the will to participate. Teacher leader interactions are important to teachers, and perhaps they need to be for leaders too. The loss of the affirmed, creative power of teachers voices, impoverishes the whole school.

Students:

Situations that involve students were chosen in approximately one out of every four positive and negative scenarios, reflecting the emotionally significant territory student considerations hold for teachers. Largely pertaining to matters of attendance and behavior, though, student related interactions with administrators demonstrated a clash of perspectives. Noticeably absent were references to leader related experiences on matters pertaining to teaching itself. In all of the positive and negative examples no direct references occurred, involving emotionally important encounters about what teachers are primarily there to do: teach. It would seem that good 'teaching' may be synonymous with good classroom management as far as the data on memorable teacher leader interactions are concerned. This is a somewhat surprising finding. Ostensibly, both teachers and leaders share a primary concern for the quality of learning in classrooms. Is this factor missing from the data because these interactions are not emotionally memorable or because they are simply not occurring? Perhaps the classroom is tacitly understood to be the teacher's territory. Perhaps, since most of what goes on there never becomes a matter of public concern, it may not be high on the priority list of the principal, whose domains of concern may be more outwardly directed, managing the image of the school as an entity. Teachers object to principals making a fuss only about the outward show. They believe this is misplaced emphasis, taking away from the notice of classroom work.

Thank you's and commendations for things other than classroom teaching were nice, but for teachers, apparently beside the point.

Presenting the school to the world in a complimentary light is an important part of the administrator's job. The level of success in this regard can have career implications for the principal. Perhaps there is a hidden 'sameness' here in that both teachers' and leaders' have career concerns clearly in focus. In that sense their domains of concern run parallel to each other, yet by and large, they seem not to intersect. Ironically, the resultant conflicts, reflect emotional misunderstandings arising from the "emotional geography" of "moral distance" (Hargreaves, 2000).

As part of the general round in schools, teachers and leaders may experience quite different emotional associations within the same converging but not necessarily congruent domains: students, school climate, careers, organizational procedures and teacher colleagues. These are domains of convergence and domains over which both groups may experience concern, but not necessarily the same concerns. Therefore they may not be domains of congruence.

School Climate

In time, with dispiriting leadership, a “memory vine” (Beatty, 2000) of stories archived from the minds of staff both here and gone, can leave a school mired in cynicism, where pervasive suspicion, distrust and hopelessness, overshadow other feelings, and dim the chances for confidence and optimism. In these schools often the spark is gone.

Conversely, schools in which leaders are described as generally “cooperative,” “genuine,” “taking a personal interest” “supportive” “a real people person,” and “knowing what you were about” enjoy a climate that is “safe” where there is “security” and a reasonable expectation of “continuous justice.”(25) “I really enjoy teaching for those types of people. That’s why I came to this school in the first place seven years ago. It was because I knew who the administrator was.” (5) Teachers who recalled working in a school climate created by this kind of leader experienced an emotional energy from the congruence of moral perspectives or moral purposes, an emotionally experienced closeness in “moral distance” (Hargreaves, 2000) shared with their leaders. . . . the best principal that I’ve ever been under, . . . she really cares for the kids more than any other principal I’ve worked for. And this is really important to me. . . she’s always there. I really like her for being that way. So I can always kid with her and stuff as a result. The previous principal was nice. It’s not that I didn’t get along with him. He was like so many of them are, very political, very professional and kept you at arm’s length. And with him, just to get approval for a chocolate bar drive took me a month. . . I feel very comfortable with her. I respect what she does.(45) This closeness inspires and fosters the teacher’s confidence to seek out creative new possibilities for kids. And success breeds success. Positive feedback, about what goes on in classroom presumably would be motivational. Occasions such as these were not recalled by any of the 53 teachers interviewed.

Neitzche once spoke of ‘the horror of the unobserved life’ (Yalom,1992). In a climate of appreciation, of being seen and known, strongly felt emotional energies are generated, energies upon which individuals and whole systems can draw. While believing you may be being watched can lead to Foucault’s notion of self-surveillance and added caution, believing you are being seen, heard, approved of, and appreciated, can lead to better practice and more creative risk-taking based on the expectation that you are safe, no matter how the experiment turns out. A culture of fear and concern, or a culture of courage and creativity: the leader is largely responsible for this unseen but powerful variable in what goes on in schools. “In a successful organization, people acknowledge, understand each other’s purposes and work together” (Hargreaves, 2000) Schools are places of inescapable convergence but when this convergence in domains of concern, is coupled with congruity of purpose, communicated at all levels, anxiety is reduced and energies are released, creating the potential for what “flow” (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990; Beatty 2000a) Educational leadership whether deliberate or inadvertent, involves the creation of school climate and in so being is a fundamentally emotional matter.

A culture full of silence and emotional subversion pervades many school cultures, whose members, in the name of ‘being professional’ and at the expense of deeper human understanding and authentic relationship, unquestioningly accept the need for ‘control’ and the pursuant demands of complex organisational processes.

Teachers and leaders must ‘manage’ large numbers of ‘relationships’ every day. However, their relationships with each other often fall short of, or even compromise each others’ capacity to do this well. This may stem in part from the lack of reciprocal flow of emotional meaning. They do not tell each other how they really feel or how they are interpreting their feelings. Nor do they discuss the meanings about themselves and each other that they are attaching to these interpretations. Yet, without this communication they cannot transcend the barriers of their separate domains, and their different knowings of ‘school’ and of each other. The imperative to retain a

professional 'cool' at all times prohibits candour and buries authenticity in deference to a pseudo rational reality that no one believes for a minute actually exists.

And so leaders and teachers 'play' school, just as villagers and emperors play at fashion. Events like the shootings at Columbine in 1999, court proceedings in the UK over teachers' illnesses being linked directly to the stresses of their work, and suicides among school principals are indications, that something is terribly wrong.

Needs desires and fears define us. We want to be who we think we are. Yet addressing the dissonance among our own emotions, behaviours and core values is something we intuitively avoid, preferring to follow other desires and answer other(s)' needs. Consistently, we manage by putting off for another day, the facing of our fears. Teachers, who have fears about their leaders, presumably have leaders who may fear them too. Fears can define relationships, limiting the scope of what individuals may accomplish together, and shifting the focus to other things. According to Bertrand Russell, "Fear is the main source of superstition, and one of the main sources of cruelty. To conquer fear is the beginning of wisdom." In the Scottish play we learn "When our actions do not, our fears do make us traitors."

It takes **courage and counter-intuition** to face inner demons and it takes a brave reflective stance to overcome traditional barriers between teachers and leaders, something both can initiate, but something each must do for her/himself. Instead, all too often, teachers and leaders experience the discontinuity of scrambled ideals and hidden agendas, resulting in suspicion, caution and defeat.

Commitment . . . to Connectedness

There is a powerful synergy in connectedness when it is coupled with commitment. When teachers and leaders, counterintuitively 'move toward the danger' (Maurer, 1995) they discover the need to re-examine assumptions and beliefs about school, about each other and about themselves. They also discover the need to question some of their convictions in order to open themselves to the possibility of learning from each other. This process calls for "breaking the silence" (Beatty, 2000b) on emotions in order to discover the uncharted territory of what teachers and leaders really feel and really believe. Placing emotional meaning higher on teachers' and leaders' agendas can only increase the possibilities for authentic and educationally invaluable teacher leader relationships.

Emotional Accountability

Educational leaders in order to take responsibility for what they do, need to be emotionally accountable too. There is an emotional economy in a school. The leader is not an emotionally neutral factor. Whether by omission and commission, s/he is either adding or subtracting from the affective bottom line. The spirit of a school is a matter of emotion. Every day, educational leaders make decisions, communicate and act in ways which carry, safeguard, ignore, and even jeopardize this 'spark.'

Teachers need validation and respect from their leaders and peers. When the constant state of deprivation in this regard, 'the insult' is added to by a leader-inflicted emotional 'injury,' it is not surprising that teachers suffer stress and depression, becoming disconnected from their source of pride and courage, their belief in themselves and their efficacy in pursuing a shared purpose. In this sense they become quite "literally demoralized" (Hargreaves, 1998). Teacher self-efficacy is easily shaken by an attack from an administrator. What teachers do in classrooms leaves them so emotionally vulnerable and overextended, that being undermined, misunderstood or wrongly accused by their principal can have serious implications for their psychological and physical well being. When teachers become disconnected from their power, their faith in self, their source of energy is threatened. Coupled with a loss of power from unavailable leadership support, teachers become even more isolated, and anxious, contributing to a pervasive level of stress that can be

debilitating for them and for their students. Emotional accountability deserves further study as it bears upon effective school leadership. Schools run on love – of the kids, the subject, the work, the hope, the possibilities, the smiles of satisfaction, the looks of appreciation, the little things that keep teachers and students and leaders going.

What Teachers Want and Need From Their Leaders

If you were to ask me what teachers need from their leaders so that they can do their best with your students, and I were to infer the answer from these findings it would be as follows: less telling, ordering, humiliating, prejudging, relying on hearsay, interfering, manipulating and controlling and careless, career affecting decision making and job referencing. It would also be more connectedness and a commitment to professional relationship: thanking, commending, and appreciating, asking , listening, consulting and collaborating, considering together the apparent inconsistencies and incongruities when their professional domains converge about career, students, school climate, organizational procedures, and their colleagues. It would also be more support : reliable disciplinary backup; pro-active participation in their professional development and career path; genuine interest in and commitment to a shared purpose in creating better classroom and other opportunities for kids; and again, a more consultative role in these and other matters including organizational procedures and interactions with their colleagues. Finally, it would be more courage to change the pattern of communication and the traditions that deaden expectations. It takes courage to risk making contact, apologizing for mistakes and facing discrepancies in perspective together; it takes awareness and courage to counterintuitively move toward the ‘danger’ of one’s own fears in order to break free of the emotional enculturation inherent in self-replicating bureaucracy, an emotional hold that keeps people addicted to the hierarchical and power-stratified images of leadership and makes relational leadership so difficult to achieve; and it takes commitment for leaders to seek out whatever sources of support they need in order to accomplish these things; to ask teachers for what they need and want from them, allowing themselves to be authentic and ‘human’ and providing the basis for the beginnings of ‘relationship,’ recognizing that teachers can and must assist and support them too, in emotional as well as organizational ways if new ways of being in schools and in life are to be discovered.

.....

The culture into which educational administrators are inculcated, is a culture which can trap their teachers and themselves, one that is based on an anachronistic “code” of silence. In this sense it may share much with the code of silence among boys who were interviewed recently by William Pollack for his study of Real Boys in America.

I’m struck by the depth, compassion, and cry of their voices. They reveal a hunger for connection, a longing to be themselves, and a powerful yearning for change.. . . The boy code, which restricts a boy’s expression of emotion and his cries for help, has silenced the souls of our sons and paralyzed our natural instincts to reach out to them. Our boys are exceedingly isolated. And unwittingly, we . . . are still leaving them out in the cold.

In schools, teachers and leaders may also be caught in an unwritten but very powerful “code” of silence. From the findings in these studies, teachers and leaders are ‘longing for connection’. They have a ‘powerful yearning for change.’ And they are suffering from restrictions of ‘expression of emotion’ under the prohibition of their ‘cries for help’. Are we silencing the souls of our teachers and our leaders? Can this silence be healthy? And perhaps most alarming of all: are school cultures paralyzing our natural instincts to reach out to each other? Perhaps now is the time to begin “Breaking the Silence” (Beatty, 2000b).

Our experiences are shaped, coloured and marked in our memories by their emotional significance. People will forget what you say. They will forget what you do. But they will never forget how you made them feel. Leaders who inspire us to believe in ourselves make an emotional impact that is empowering.

The changes we need in this world can only come from sincere, passionate collaborations of committed creative persons who are free to be all that they can be. As authentic relational leaders, you can, together with your staffs, and your students, quite simply, change this world.

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