Goleman's Six Leadership Styles in Practice

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The Six Leadership Styles in Practice

The Coercive Leader

According to Daniel Goleman, the Coercive Leader is one of the most aggressive leadership styles and is marked by an expectation and/or demand for immediate compliance.

Situation Where Coercive Leadership Is Effective

At City High School, the old Nuveau Gothic style of the original building leaves much to be desired in security. Recessed walls within walls and corners speak to the architecture of the time but are a nightmare to monitor, even with cameras. Several students have been leaving the school just before the second lunch bell, leaving campus to go and get food from the local restaurants just two blocks away and returning to campus with the food. The student handbook states the school's policy is not to allow students to leave campus for lunch. All students leaving campus are in the same class, taught by a teacher who has been at the school for just over 15 years and is well-liked by the community and students.

The problem is not just that students are leaving; they are leaving by an exit in the new addition, which locks immediately when the door closes and must be buzzed in by a key fob given to teachers to enter the building. While the teacher is not giving his key fob to the students, he does know and suggests that the students use a rock to keep the door slightly cracked so they can come and go without having to sign out or be buzzed back in. The students are bringing food back to the teacher as well.

On Friday, a van from the local jail transporting prisoners to the local courthouse is involved in an accident, and three inmates escape. One of the inmates dates one of the girls, a junior at the high school, and she tells a friend that he has made contact with her and is planning to pick her up at the high school. The friend tells a teacher, who tells admin, and the school is put on lockdown just after the students leave for lunch and put the rock in the door and go. When the

students return, the school is on lockdown, and their door, which no one knew was open, is now closed. They call a friend to have them let in, and the student tells them the school is on lockdown. The friend tells the teacher who lets them leave, and the teacher makes contact with the admin who, after discussing the lockdown process, realizes that no one has checked that door and they are uncertain of how it got secured. There is an increased chance that the inmate might be in the school.

The admin contacted local public safety, and the lockdown became an escalated event that drew the attention of local news stations that set up camp on the school lawn. The lockdown takes seven hours as law enforcement searches the building several times in tandem to ensure the inmate is not in the building. The inmate is finally located in the backseat of one of the student cars in the parking lot.

The rationale for the use of Coercive Leadership

The veteran teacher is called in to speak with the administrator. The administrator tells the teacher that the behavior must stop immediately and that a letter of reprimand is being put in the employee's file. After meeting with the teacher, the admin addresses the faculty about the policy and situation in a meeting.

The administrator has every right to demonstrate coercive leadership action in this situation. The teacher directly violated school policy, and the decision to allow the students to leave put the school, the teachers, and the students in a precarious situation. Utilizing the emotional intelligence theory, the administrator should emphasize that the teacher's behavior is understood as the teacher taught here when the school did have an open lunch policy; however, the new policy is for the protection of all the teachers and students. However, the teacher is

expected to adhere to the guidelines in the handbook and respect the administrators' authority, who are responsible for the safety and well-being of every soul in the building.

The Authoritative Leader

The Authoritative Leader establishes themselves as the expert in the school, on the school but also uses the team's talents to help each team member move forward with empowerment.

Situation Where Authoritative Leadership Is Effective

The school is buzzing with excitement and anxiety. The end of the school year is three weeks away, and the district will adopt a new student information system next year. The professional development team has been working for months to get an expert from the company to schedule a date to come and train the entire district in one session. They have finally scheduled a representative on the last professional development day of the school year. It is a four-hour training session, and the high school principal is nervous.

He faces two problems: first, professional development days are prone to low attendance as staff members don't often take them seriously. They love the perks of a four-day week, except for the one week of the month when they are required to work on Monday. Second, when the whole district is together, they are notorious for sitting with friends, playing on their phones, not paying attention, and not being respectful; teachers are the worst students sometimes. On top of those two things, a group of teachers are pushing back against the new system and are historically not tech-savvy. He anticipates they will either not pay attention or will ask the representative to repeat the same tasks repeatedly.

Rationale for Use of Authoritative Leadership

The principal sends an email informing the staff that the administrators will provide breakfast and lunch for the teachers in honor of Teacher Appreciation Week. He says this professional development day is mandatory; no one will be excused without a doctor's note before 6 p.m. the night before the training. He also sends a list of tasks that will be covered and explains that each person must demonstrate knowledge of how to complete the tasks.

Finally, in the email, the principal asks the teachers to pay more attention than they usually do, and as we go through the training, please write down individual questions for later and not interrupt the training. He ends the email with the reminder that we are all experts in some area, and some of us will pick this up faster than others, and what that means is that we will do what we always do for each other at the beginning of every school year: work as a team and help each other.

The principal employs the authoritative leadership theory in this situation by using emotional intelligence to understand the strengths and weaknesses of his staff. He is firm with his team's requirements but assures the whole team that they have value and that we are all a community of learners helping learners be better teachers.

The Affiliative Leader

The Affiliative Leader is adept at using emotional intelligence and empathy. This leader is usually loved by some, liked by most, and respected by all.

Situation Where Affiliative Leadership Is Effective

Everybody knows Mrs. Tilly. She is exuberant, animated, and always in the middle of everything. She is the senior class sponsor, founder of a student achievement club, president of

the CTA, and in charge of the PBIS/incentive program. And while she works tirelessly to serve, she ensures everyone knows it. She is the alpha and will not be challenged. She is the "no need to change" teacher. And while she is appreciated, she is also incredibly overwhelmed, easily angered, and manipulative. New teachers have come into the building with ideas they were excited about and have been shot down or run over because Mrs. Tilly is unafraid to throw her weight around. She refuses help with everything she undertakes and complains when no one offers help. Most recently, a new sponsorship position opened up, and two new teachers decided they would like to share the position as both of them had competed in the same activity in high school. They went to the principal to express interest, only to find that Ms. Tilly had taken the sponsorship and "didn't need any assistance."

The principal began to see what was happening slowly – none of the teachers knew how to bring to his attention that while Mrs. Tilly was always complaining and sending passive aggressive emails to other teachers, she was not accepting help when offered.

The Rationale for Affiliative Leadership

The principal asks to meet with Mrs. Tilly and expresses appreciation for all she has and is doing for the school during that meeting. She returns the compliment with a response that "someone has to do it," and that is when the principal employs and explains that he would like to put together a committee of teachers who have expressed interest in helping and begin to divide up some of the "management" aspects of everything that she has taken on. They will be the Teacher Involvement Committee, and she will sit as the honorary chair for the first year. While three teachers have been assigned to the committee and asked to serve, Mrs. Tilly can also select one teacher to serve on the committee.

Mrs. Tilly is upset and begins to cry, saying she feels stabbed in the back by the whole school, especially her fellow teachers. The principal explained that other teachers would like to have the opportunity to be involved with students but need guidance and even mentoring in that process. After all, Mrs. Tilly plans to retire in five years, so she should begin to show others how to organize and do what she does so her transition will be smooth. She realizes what he says is true.

The next day, Mrs. Tilly sends an email to the list of teachers and asks for everyone's input on when they should first meet and schedule regular meetings. Soon, several teachers volunteered to serve on the committee and help with different activities and events, which were left only to Mrs. Tilly.

Though there are hiccups throughout the process, Mrs. Tilly slowly begins to realize that the team of teachers is highly effective and that while she gets to be involved, and sometimes in charge, she is beginning to have more free time and likes it.

The Democratic Leader

The Democratic Leader has high emotional intelligence in understanding relationships and personalities. This leader will work to become a listener and a communicator and believes that the team they have cultivated is mature enough to make group decisions.

Situation Where Democratic Leadership Is Effective

The school has received a generous donation from a long-time district supporter. The donation is earmarked to incorporate more performing arts and disciplines into the curriculum. The principal is excited about spending money on the dwindling band and non-existent choir at the high school level; however, the cheerleading sponsor believes that the lion's share of the

funds should be used to create a dance team for the school. Soon, there were more suggestions for using the money than the principal entertained.

He asks each teacher to write three suggestions on how the performing arts and disciplines could be incorporated into their different subject areas. He asks for specificity for a scenario to be written out, and he lets them know that if something suggested is directed only to the creation of a new group or cannot, in his mind, benefit a majority of students, he will strike the suggestion. After receiving these three suggestions from each teacher, he reads through them, removes the unreasonable requests, and places them on a survey. He asks each teacher to eliminate one of their own and one of another teachers in an anonymous survey online.

The remaining suggestions are passed back to the teachers, and each teacher who still has one or two on the list is asked to put together a slideshow with a rationale, implementation, and benefits slide and send it to them. He calls a faculty meeting, shares the slideshows with the faculty, and asks them to select three areas where the money is most beneficial.

The Rationale for Democratic Leadership

If the teachers are already at a level where they can operate fairly in a democratic style, they will trust the principal to provide them with the best options for using the money. By stating that they hold the right to "veto" any suggestions, teachers understand that the principal is not "picking" on anyone but working to make the democratic process a standard of practice within the school.

The principal can trust their teachers to make decisions that will benefit the most students; many long years have allowed the teachers to build the team-minded infrastructure into their decision-making. The principal can best utilize the democratic leadership theory by building strong trust relationships with colleagues and being fair and equitable.

The Pacesetting Leader

This leader is likely a district veteran who came into a failing school and worked with the team to find their talents and put them toward a shared vision, and the building has achieved that goal. The Pacesetter has to be an empath and highly sensitive to the climate and culture of the building, as moving at the rapid pace of striving for improvement can be exhausting.

Situation Where Pacesetting Leadership Is Effective

Over the past five years, City High School's principal has turned the place around without losing veteran teachers except retirees. When they arrived, the school was the lowest performing school in the district with the highest drop-out rate, high incidences of behavioral problems, and low achievement on state testing.

Knowing that the teachers were just as concerned as the principal, he began having open forum meetings during the first year, asking what short-term changes would make a difference. He worked with their suggestions, delegated authority, reached out to the community, and increased community involvement. It has been year after year of work and dedication; it has paid off tremendously.

During the testing season, the principal just received notice in April that the district wants the whole school, electives, and cores to move to standards-based grading next year. As the district intends to begin in August, the principal pushes back, and he feels that his staff is burnt out.

The Rationale for Pacesetting Leader

Sometimes, being a leader means protecting the team. While the principal is confident that his teachers would do it, he proposes that the district allow his team to work on it during the next school year and implement it the year after other schools in the district. He presents the

preponderance of evidence of growth and new initiatives that his staff has implemented and suggests an extension for the high school. It is imperative to remember that as a school leader, one is responsible for more than just leading the staff; school leaders are responsible for protecting their staff, and they sometimes need to exhibit different types of leadership styles for various kinds of situations and depending on who they are dealing with. Pacesetting leadership shows a high understanding of compassion and caring for a team.

The Coaching Leader

This type of leadership focuses on individual teachers and helps them hone and achieve more skill and experience in their teaching. This may not be an excellent overall leadership style to employ all the time; however, as leaders must fill different roles for different team members, the Coaching Leader can help bolster those teachers who want to or need to up their game.

Situation Where Coaching Leadership Is Effective

One of the tenured ELA teachers has started working on her master's degree in curriculum design. She desires to be an instructional coach for the district. She speaks with her principal and tells him what she is working on and her needs. The principal speaks with her department chair about allowing the teacher to observe in different classrooms and subjects by having a rotating schedule in the department.

The department chair went through a similar "trade-off" four years ago when she wanted to get her leadership degree. It worked out great with all teachers getting to know all students and becoming more flexible within the department.

The Rationale for Coaching Leader

The coaching leadership style is excellent for a school community and is supportive and helpful to those members within the community. The principal will use the Coaching Leadership style in this rationale by removing barriers for the teacher, arranging opportunities, and directly mentoring the teacher as she works toward her degree.

This type of leadership style would be difficult to employ all the time with every teacher; however, knowing when to utilize it is vital because it can mean the difference between reaching and empowering a teacher leader and losing credibility.

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