Inspire Nature-Rich Work Environments through Heart-Centered Leadership and a People-Centered Approach

What is Heart-Centered Leadership?
Organizations led by heart-centered leaders become interdependent, mutually supportive, and joyful. That doesn’t mean people don’t work hard, get discouraged at times, or face challenges. What it does mean is that any challenge is secondary to the sense of purpose and pleasure felt by a shared commitment to an important mission.” (Nancy Rosenow, 2015)
“Post-occupancy Study of Nature-based Outdoor Classrooms” – Dr. Sam Dennis

“Compared to both indoor and traditional playgrounds, children in outdoor natural settings were reported to be more relaxed, happier, less impulsive, more focused, more creative and better behaved.”

(Dennis 2014)
Qualities and Values

**Quality**: Dictionary definition – an essential or distinguishing characteristic, property, or attribute.

**Value**: Dictionary definition – a principle, standard, or quality regarded as worthwhile or valuable.

In the context of leading from the heart, a quality or value is the attribute that, when we are in touch with it, would assist us in taking our next steps as individuals or as a collective group. This applies to how we relate with other team members, with our clients and people we serve, and with ourselves.

**Suggestions for using quality cards**

- Select a quality each day. How do you relate to it? What value does it have for you? How can it support you in your endeavors? Use this quality as a focus throughout the day and reflect on how it impacts your experience.
- Pick a quality at the beginning of a new cycle, or a new venture. You can pick one with a particular task in mind, a challenge to overcome, or simply give direction to focus on for a particular period of time.
- In team meetings, pass the cards around, have each person select one and share how they relate to the quality selected. Ask them to consider what opportunities exist for them with this quality.
- Ask team members to select a quality and reflect on it for a full month, sharing during team meetings or in some other way appropriate.

**Sample Qualities and Values**

- Abundance
- Creativity
- Gentleness
- Laughter
- Risking
- Adventure
- Determination
- Grace
- Liberating
- Sensitivity
- Acceptance
- Dignity
- Gratitude
- Light
- Self-care
- Attention
- Honesty
- Happiness
- Lightness
- Simplicity
- Balance
- Humility
- Healing
- Service
- Beauty
- Kindness
- Holiness
- Sharing
- Spirituality
- Caring
- Mindfulness
- Integrity
- Collaboration
- Compassion
- Commitment
- Communication
- Cooperation
- Courage
- Freedom
- Joy
- Kindness
- Wonder
1. Pass the cards around, have each person select one and share how they relate to the quality selected.

2. Ask team members to select a quality and reflect on it for a full month, sharing as they go.

Honoring our Personal Qualities

Encouraging Time in Nature
As a leader, how can you embrace experiences with the natural world as a means to support your network?
Encouraging Time in Nature

1. Find time/place outdoors for teachers to take breaks and work together
2. Create a Nature Explore Classroom

Supporting Lifelong Learning
Imagine what your work culture will reflect when you empower your staff to release preconceived ideas about what is possible to learn and become.

Support Lifelong Learning

1. Encourage teachers to be reflective practitioners
2. Embrace the growth mindset in ourselves and others.
3. Learn about each person’s interests and looks for opportunities for them to be used.

Live in Gratitude
“We can’t wait until everything is ok with us or with the rest of the world to feel thankful, or we will never experience it at all.”

MJ Ryan

What would a culture of gratefulness look like?

1. Start each day with a list of things that fill you with gratitude
2. Intentionally set aside time to appreciate someone on your team
3. Reframe the way we approach and talk about our challenges

Celebrating
Celebrating the accomplishments and success of others helps us to consider their perspectives and lets them know that we are truly seeing them.
Celebrate

1. Start conversation and meetings by acknowledging what is going right
2. Celebrate the small steps that lead up to a big goal
3. Spend time in joy with each other