Heart-Centered Leadership: Create an Inspiring Work Environment With a People-Centric, Nature-Based 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)
As a leader...

...how can you embrace experiences with the natural world as a means to support your network?

Encouraging Time in Nature

• Find time and a place outdoors for teachers to take breaks and work together
• Create a Nature Explore Classroom

Supporting Lifelong Learning
Sometimes we need encouragement to try something new.

How can you encourage others and ourselves to take the leap?

Supporting Lifelong Learning

- Encourage teachers to be reflective practitioners
- Embrace the growth mindset in ourselves and others.
- Learn about each person’s interests and look for opportunities for them to be used.
Living 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 gratitude 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 Our Personal Qualities
Qualities and Values

- **Quality:** "an essential or distinguishing characteristic, property or attribute."
- **Value:** "a principle, standard or quality regarded as worthwhile or valuable."

In leading from the heart, qualities and values are attributes that, when we recognize them, help us take next steps as individuals or groups – with ourselves, our team members, and those we serve.

Sample Qualities

- Abundance
- Acceptance
- Adventure
- Awareness
- Balance
- Beauty
- Birth
- Bountiful
- Care
- Caring
- Clarity
- Commitment
- Communication
- Compassion
- Cooperation
- Courage
- Co-creation
- Creativity
- Delight
- Determination
- Dignity
- Authenticity
- Discovery
- Harmony
- Healing
- Heart
- Encouragement
- Empowerment
- Empathy
- Enthusiasm
- Independence
- Invention
- Initiation
- Instinct
- Joy
- Kindness
- Laughter
- Learning
- Libertation
- Liberation
- Light
- Lightness
- Loving
- Service
- Mindfulness
- Simplicity
- Openness
- Spirituality
- Patience
- Steadfastness
- Peace
- Surrender
- Persistence
- Synthesis
- Playfulness
- Tenderness
- Preciousness
- Tranquility
- Presence
- Transformation
- Purity
- Trust
- Purpose
- Truth
- Radiance
- Understanding
- Respect
- Vigilance
- Responsibility
- Willingness
- Revelation
- Wisdom
- Wonder
Celebrating

- Start conversation and meetings by acknowledging what is going right
- Celebrate the small steps that lead up to a big goal
- Spend time in joy with each other
Four Tools for Cultivating Heart-Centered Leadership

- Time in Nature
- Gratitude
- Life-Long Learning
- Celebration

Our mission is to inspire joy and wonder in children, educators, and communities with a heart-centered approach to early education.

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Thank you!
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