

**CARING ENOUGH TO LEAD**  
**How Reflective Thought Leads to Moral Leadership**

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- Struggling together with the critical questions will do more to define a successful organization than all the answers in the world.
- I want to be the kind of person who is sensitive to the needs of others and caring enough to want to meet those needs in the best way that I can.
- Sergiovanni: the heart of leadership has to do with what a person believes, values, dreams about, and is committed to – the person’s personal vision, to use the popular term.
- Sergiovanni describes leaders as the first followers in the sense that “followership requires an emotional commitment to a set of ideas.”
- Sergiovanni stresses the importance of joining the heart and the head of leadership with the hand of leadership.
- Leaders are servants to their followers in that they seek to remove the obstacles that prevent them from doing their jobs and to give them the freedom and incentive to live up to their potential, while completing themselves as human beings. In DePree’s words: The first responsibility of a leader is to define reality. The last is to say thank you. In between the two, the leader must become a servant and debtor.
- Leaders must help to define a set of clear organizational values, encourage contrary opinions, provide joy, respect all individuals, communicate effectively, and in every way possible, take full advantage of the opportunities that leadership provides to “make a meaningful difference in the lives of those who permit leaders to lead.
- True leaders reject hierarchy and value others’ abilities and contributions.
- Whenever a leader fails to exercise the level of care and concern required to maintain close contact with his or her followers, the implied contract between the leader and followers is voided.
- The best leaders are precisely in the middle of the beliefs, dreams, and values of those whom they lead.
- Burns defined leadership in terms such as moral, servant, transformational and even soulful.
- Leadership is the ability to help create a shared vision; it is the ability both to see and to help others see beyond the present realities and glimpse the unlimited possibilities that exist in the future.
- The most important question for leaders to ask is What do I care about?
- People who don't care can never be leaders. They have no passion; they have no commitment; they have no capacity to inspire others.
- Good management involves caring for people, not manipulating them.
- The simple truth is that when you are seeking to discover the nature of human beings, most times you will find what you are looking to find.
- I am convinced that our basic beliefs about people define the limits of their potential in the workplace.
- It is always the little things and not the big things that determine whether or not a person will be successful in almost any endeavor in life.
- Life affords us too few opportunities to show others how much we care; we can’t afford to waste those opportunities.

- Some leaders build organizations where risk is avoided at all cost. The chief goal of such organizations invariably becomes safety rather than growth. Over time, these organizations become stagnant; they lose their edge and become boring and unrewarding places to work.
- When principals, teachers and other staff members have healthy appetites for risk, they are more likely to experience positive growth. In fact, the more risks, the bigger the risks, and the more people involved in risk-taking behavior, the better the results.
- It is a privilege and stroke of good fortune to be born an American.
- By making a particular decision, we can feel superior, powerful and in control of the situation. Sometimes, by choosing a specific course of action, we can put certain people in their places and reaffirm the pecking order. Other times, we may use decisions to punish people, teach them a lesson, or get even for some real or imagined transgression. At still other times, we may make a decision that will put someone in our debt, or perhaps we will decide an issue in a way that repays someone else to whom we feel indebted. All these not-so-nice motives are lurking in the shadows, ready to creep into the decisions of leaders who are not vigilant enough to ask themselves the critical question “Why am I doing this?”
- Try to recall a decision you made recently while acting in some sort of leadership role (e.g. Formal work role, parenting role, informal group leader, etc.)
- Leaders must never forget that the strongest people of all are also the most gentle: The strength of their convictions coupled with their caring natures gives them an inner strength that doesn’t require external confirmation.
- School leaders must occasionally protect teachers who care too much from themselves.
- The nature and strength of the relationships that we are able to build with ourselves are critical because we can only give away to others those things that we already possess. If we don’t have an abundance of self-love and caring, then we don’t have any caring and love left over that we can give away to others.
- If you have not failed, then you have not tried very hard. Everywhere you trip is where treasure lies.
- Ways to express caring for self:
- Always talk to yourself and treat yourself like you would a dear friend.
- Learn how to play – not just to win, but just to play.
- Recognize your strengths, focus more on those strengths and build from those strengths.
- Celebrate and enjoy your successes as well as the successes of others.
- Seek to maintain a state of balance between your need to be productive in your professional life and your need to be satisfied in your personal life.
- Strive to keep things in perspective.
- Make a habit to laugh every day.
- Make sure you have someone you can talk with frankly and honestly when the need arises.
- Remember that the daily act of caring is extremely demanding and energy-consuming work.
- Enjoy the journey and forget about the destination. Your life will be much more productive and less stressful if you can learn to do this.
- First education reform wave: Address watered-down curricula, low academic standards for students and lax accountability for teachers, administrators and schools.
- Second wave: restructure education by redesigning roles and relationships to get job done more effectively and efficiently.
- For the last 100 years, schools have operated on a 19<sup>th</sup>-C model that casts principals in the role of management and teachers in the role of labor. Perhaps more than anything else, this has contributed to fractured school communities where there are few shared values and no clear consensus on goals

or the best means to achieve those goals. The lack of shared vision has at best limited the effectiveness of schools as organizations and at worst created adversarial relationships where teachers, principals, and staff are pulling opposite direction, more intent on maintaining the balance of power than in achieving a common dream.

- Society may be asking schools to do too much.
- The most serious problem facing public educational system in America is a lack of collective willpower that comes from a deep sense of caring about schools, children, and what schools can and should be doing for children.
- We need all of us out there, stating, clarifying, discussing, modeling, filling all of space with the messages we care about. If we do that, fields develop and with them their wondrous capacity to bring energy into form. If we have not bothered to create a field of vision that is coherent and sincere, people will encounter other fields, the ones we have created unintentionally or casually.
- A shared vision is not an idea. It is a force in people's hearts, a force of impressive power. It may be inspired by an idea, but once it goes further – if it is compelling enough to acquire the support of more than one person – then it is no longer an abstraction. It is palpable. People begin to see it as if it exists.
- The school derives power from this connectedness and the shared vision becomes a powerful force, a force capable of transforming the school into the kind of place that we all know it can and should be.
- When purpose, social contract, and local school autonomy become the basis of schooling, two important things happen. The school is transformed from an organization to a covenantal community, and the basis of authority changes, from an emphasis on bureaucratic and psychological authority to moral authority.
- Like most other professional educators, I want to feel that my life counts for something, that I make a difference. I want to feel that my life has touched the lives of others in some small but significant way.
- A good teacher can give a child power over his/her own life.
- The life a person is influenced and shaped by a personal board of directors.
- Most of us become more comfortable in our professional lives as we realize we don't have to climb mountains for other people – we can pick our own mountains!
- You can't be a dancer as long as you are watching your feet and counting your steps – you can only do dancing.
- Authentic leaders link what they think, what they seek, and what they do.
- George Bernard Shaw once said that while the reasonable man adapts to the world, the unreasonable one persists in trying to make the world adapt to him. Thus he concluded, all progress depends on the unreasonable man.