



RELATIONSHIPS ARE KEY, BUT NOT NEARLY ENOUGH

Leading for Learning Summer Program

Presented by Chris Smeaton (CDSmeaton Consulting)



AGENDA

01

Let's focus on the importance of relationships

02

The new leadership requirements

03

Getting the most out of Professional Growth Plans

04

Coaching Conversations and Fireside Chats

05

Leading your organization, your people and yourself!

WHY IS FOSTERING EFFECTIVE RELATIONSHIPS SO IMPORTANT FOR LEADERS?




" A LEADER BUILDS POSITIVE WORKING RELATIONSHIPS WITH MEMBERS OF THE SCHOOL COMMUNITY AND LOCAL COMMUNITY"

- Acting with fairness, respect and integrity;
- Demonstrating empathy and a genuine concern for others;
- Creating a welcoming, caring, respectful and safe learning environment;
- Creating opportunities for parents/guardians, as partners in education, to take an active role in their children's education;
- Establishing relationships with First Nations, Metis and Inuit parents/guardians, Elders/knowledge keepers, local leaders and community members;
- Demonstrating a commitment to the health and well-being of all teachers, staff and students;
- Acting consistently in the best interest of students;
- Engaging in collegial relationships while modeling and promoting open, collaborative dialogue;
- Communicating, facilitating and solving problems effectively; and
- Implementing processes for improving working relationships and dealing with conflict with the school community.

WHICH INDICATORS ARE MOST IMPORTANT TO YOU AS A LEADER

1. Review all the indicators and choose your top five.
2. Eliminate one of your top five to get down to your top four.
3. Eliminate one of your top four to get down to your top three.
4. Share your top three (without explaining) with three others in the room.
5. Share class results- what are they telling you?
6. How would your school and/or local community know that these are your top three indicators? What evidence do you have to demonstrate your commitment to these top indicators?



Our experience suggests that fostering wellbeing in our schools and school systems is the key that unlocks the transformational power of education. Students learn best when they are well. Supporting the wellbeing of staff is equally important. “Just as children need to be healthy, safe, engaged, challenged, and supported to perform to their highest ability, so do the school employees who are charged with educating, guiding, nurturing, and protecting them.”- National Association of Chronic Disease Directors





From then to now...

The shifts in leadership includes being more relational which impacts mental health, wellness and ultimately student learning/success!



AN OLD VISION FOR LEADERSHIP

- Traditional leadership: performance-driven
- Ego-centric

“When a leader focuses on results before building relationships, compliance not commitment will be the result!”


- Chris Smeaton



A NEW VISION FOR LEADERSHIP

- Human-centered leadership: people-first
- Connections first
- Eco-centric





CORE VALUES

- Empathy
- Compassion
- Vulnerability



A CASE FOR EMPATHY

Empathy is increasingly recognized in leadership research as a **core competency** that enhances organizational performance, employee well-being, and team dynamics—especially in complex, people-driven environments like education.


SOME RESEARCH ON THE IMPACT OF EMPATHY



- Builds trust and psychological safety
- Improves conflict resolution, motivation, and team management
- Improves communication and engagement
- Drives inclusive and equitable leadership
- Correlates with better organizational outcomes

THE ROLE OF COMPASSION


1. Awareness of suffering: Recognizing when someone else is struggling, hurt, or in distress.
 2. Emotional resonance: Feeling concern or empathy for that person's suffering.
 3. Motivation to act: A desire and often an effort to reduce or ease that suffering.
- "Compassion is not a relationship between the healer and the wounded. It's a relationship between equals." – Pema Chödrön



“Compassion is the quality of having positive intentions and real concern for others. Compassion in leadership creates stronger connections between people. It improves collaboration, raises levels of trust, and enhances loyalty. In addition, studies find that compassionate leaders are perceived as stronger and more competent.” - Rasmus Hougaard, Jacqueline Carter and Nick Hobson

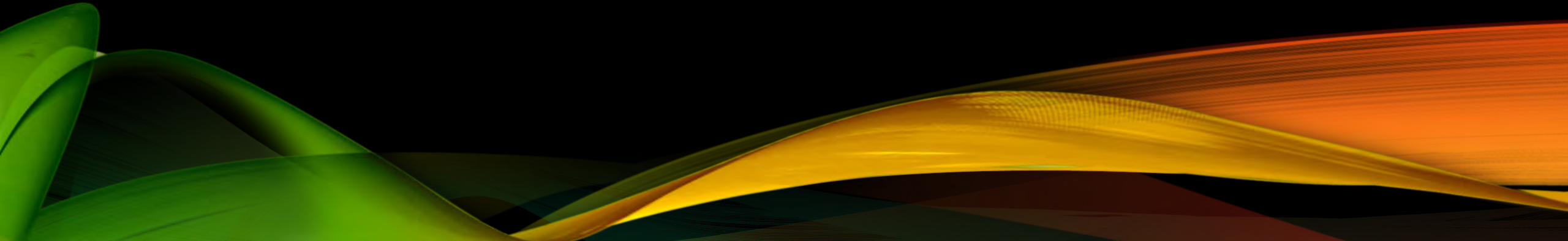
THE STRENGTH OF VULNERABILITY

- Embracing imperfection and uncertainty
- Encouraging openness and authenticity
- Modeling resilience and adaptability
- "Vulnerability is the birthplace of innovation, creativity, and change." – Brené Brown

- 
1. Relationships begin with presence.
 2. Presence builds trust.
 3. Trust allows for conversations on practice.
 4. Conversations on practice allows for reflection and leads to a positive impact on teaching and learning.

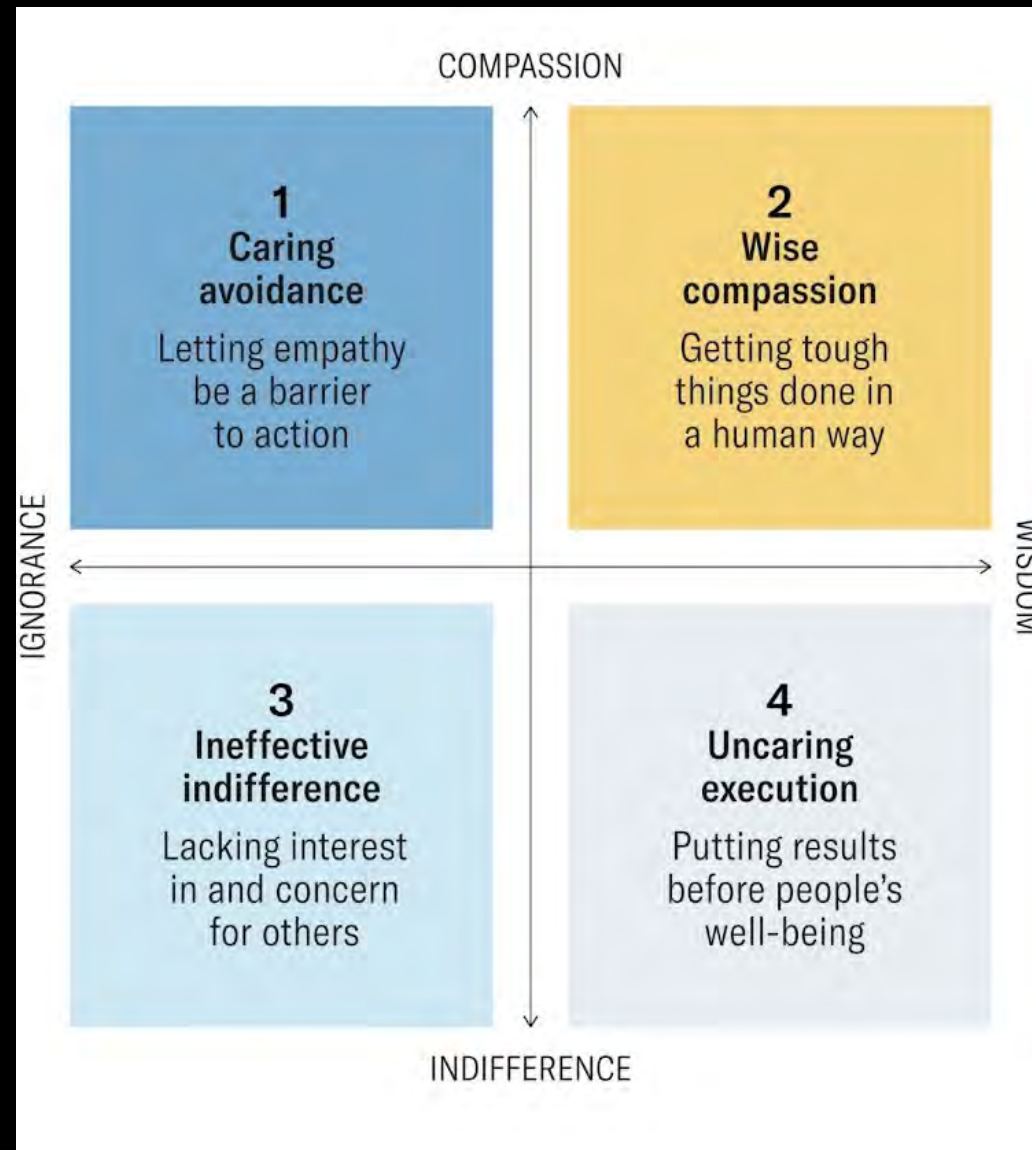
WISE COMPASSIONATE LEADERSHIP IS THE ABILITY TO DO HARD THINGS IN A HUMAN WAY.


Compassion on its own is not enough. For effective leadership, compassion must be combined with wisdom.



THE WISE COMPASSION LEADERSHIP MATRIX

SOURCE: RASMUS HOUGAARD

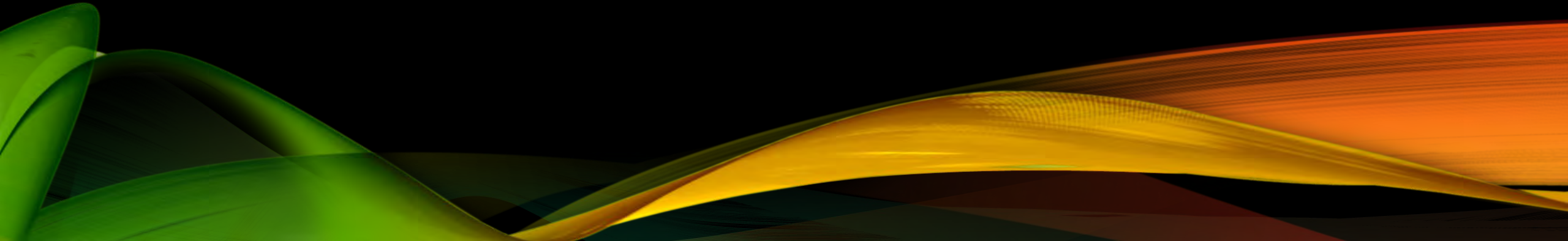




*"THE BEST LEADERS MAKE
PEOPLE FEEL GOOD
ABOUT WORKING ON
AND MAKING PROGRESS
RELATIVE TO A TOUGH
PROBLEM OR SET OF
CIRCUMSTANCES." -
MICHAEL FULLAN*

GREAT LEADERS MAKE PEOPLE FEEL NOTICED

What do you do to make your staff, your students, your community feel noticed?



GROWTH PLANS



HISTORY



TRAIT OF A PROFESSIONAL



COMPLIANCE VS.
COMMITMENT DOCUMENT

GROWTH PLAN COMPONENTS

Goals should be written in verb form and are not simply events (i.e. Completion of Leading for Learning)

Strategies (3-4 only) are specific to the goal- make them meaningful and not just attend PD

Success Indicators are about you and your goals. They are not about outcomes for others.

LEADERSHIP GROWTH PLAN EXAMPLE


Goal- Develop my skills as an instructional leader.

High Yield Strategies

1. Visit at least classrooms per week and look for high quality teaching.
2. Review latest research on effective teaching practice.
3. Survey the staff on what they believe are effective teaching practices and share back with them.

Success Indicators

1. I have greater confidence in my ability to provide feedback to teachers.
2. My ability to prioritize classroom visits has increased.
3. My knowledge of effective teaching practice is enhanced.



DON'T LET RESOURCES NEEDED BE
SIMPLY MONEY OR MORE TIME.
LOOK FOR ADDITIONAL SUPPORTS
THAT DON'T COST OR COST LESS!
BE CREATIVE!


CREATE A LEADERSHIP GROWTH PLAN

1. With a partner, choose one competency.
2. For the competency, write down a goal, 3 high yield strategies and 3 success indicators. (Place on the Leadership Growth Plan Template)
3. Share with other people in the class.
4. What was the feedback?

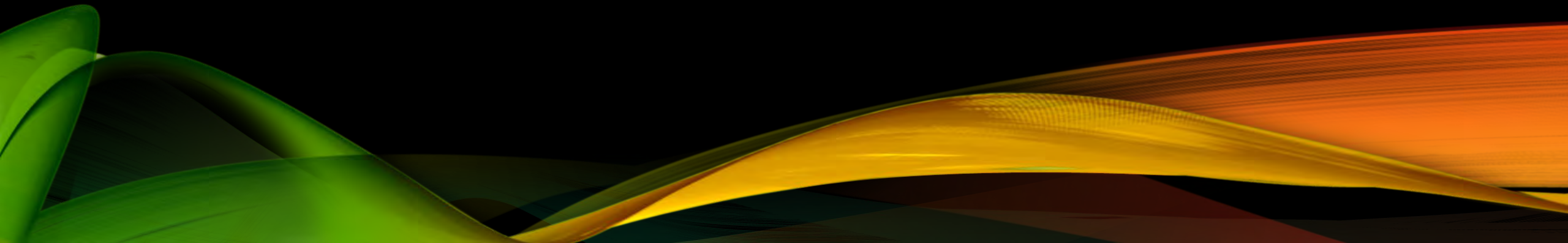
GROWTH PLANS ARE COMPLIANT DOCUMENTS UNLESS THEY ARE ACCOMPANIED WITH A CONVERSATION

- Every leader, every teacher, 3X/year
- The conversation is like a "fireside chat."
- It is about them and their growth on yours!
- It is about having the individual be reflective on her own practice.
- It is **rarely** about giving advice.

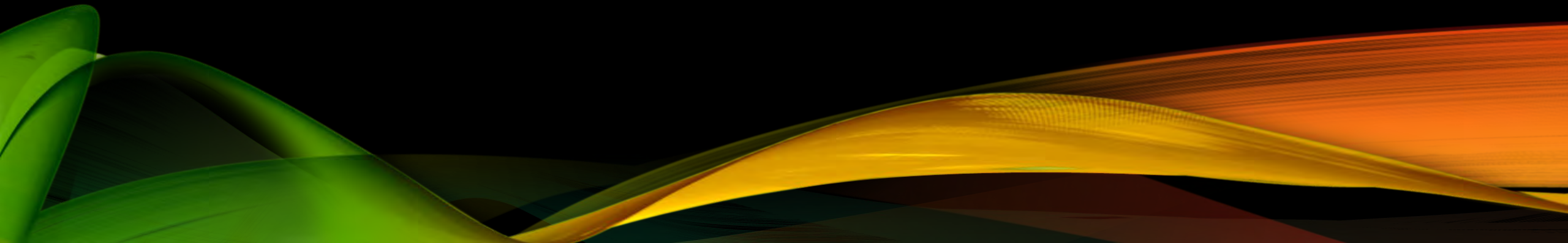
COACHING CONVERSATION DEMO

1. Talk less, listen more.
 2. Ask pluralistic, open-ended questions.
 3. Guide, when necessary, don't lead if possible.
 4. Side by side not across the desk
- 

DEMO



COMMENTS



- Social intelligence
- Problem-solving
- Conflict management
- Decision-making
- Setting and sharing a compelling vision
- Change management
- Innovation
- Entrepreneurship



- Interpersonal skills
- Emotional intelligence
- Coaching ability & trustworthiness
- Inclusiveness
- People management

- (Learning) Agility
- Industry expertise
- Managing yourself
- Courage
- Org citizenship behavior



CONTACT INFORMATION

Email- cdsmeaton@gmail.com

Phone- (403)-634-0482

LinkedIn- Chris Smeaton

Instagram- @cdsmeatonconsulting

THANK YOU!

