Dear Colleagues,

I was honored to have the role of inaugural QASSP Service Officer during 2010-2015. Throughout my tenure it was my privilege and pleasure to provide a range of services for individual members and Branches.

One of these services was to write a short ‘From the Service Officer’ contribution to The Queensland Principal.

The complete suite of these articles is reproduced here. Feel free to use and distribute the articles singularly or as a complete set. Almost without exception the articles address the so-called “soft” skills of leadership.

I postulate that not only are these so-called soft skills, hard to do but also they are absolutely critical for leadership effectiveness. Leadership is first and foremost an inside job. The better we understand and lead ourselves and in turn understand, communicate with and influence others, the more effectively we develop high performance teams. High performance teams are built on a platform of strong relational trust and high expectations.

I hope you find some aspects of the articles useful and I will be delighted to have you make contact if I can be of assistance with your personal and organisational goals.

To your highest and best,

Earle

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About Earle Taylor

What drives Earle is a passion for helping individuals, groups and organisations to actualise excellence.

During a thirty-year career as a Queensland primary school principal, he balanced his school leadership responsibilities with extensive involvement as a workshop facilitator and coach within the broader state education community. Two years of this time were on secondment to Education Queensland International as a leadership trainer with the Supreme Education Council in Doha Qatar.

He expanded to the private sector in 1995 with the formation of his part time leadership training and coaching business, which became full time in 2010. Earle was honored to be the inaugural Service Officer for the Queensland Association of State School Principals. He currently provides leadership training and coaching to the wider educational and business sectors within Australia and overseas.

About YOUR LEADERSHIP UNLEASHED Pty Ltd

“Actualising Excellence”
  Leading self
  Leading others
  Leading organisations

It was Abraham Maslow who said if you plan on being less than you are capable of being, you will probably be unhappy all the days of your life.

YOUR LEADERSHIP UNLEASHED is quite simply about facilitating individuals, groups and organisations to recognise their highest and best potentials and then taking affirmative action to make their dreams a reality.

To be anything less than our highest and best is a tragedy.

To facilitate the actualisation of excellence with others is a life’s work of the highest order and to take delight in the achievements of others is the highest reward.

Programs and activities of YOUR LEADERSHIP UNLEASHED are rooted in the belief that leadership is an inside job it comes from within.

Do you ask yourself:
  How do I lead and manage myself so that I can best lead others and my organisation?
  How do I lead and manage others to lead and manage themselves in service of each other and the organisation?
  How do I lead my organisation to be self actualising?

If these are your questions then contact us to explore how YOUR LEADERSHIP UNLEASHED can help you become all that you are capable of being.

Examples of some short workshops follow. Other short workshops and longer programs can be viewed at www.yourleadershipunleashed.com

Your Leadership Unleashed will be delighted to customise a professional development program and/or individual or group executive coaching to suit your needs.

Contact Earle for a complimentary discussion on earle@yourleadershipunleashed.com or Mobile International +61422278281 Australia 0422278281
SHORT WORKSHOP SERIES

ACTUALISING EXCELLENCE

Your Leadership Unleashed specializes in customizing an experience to suit your individual training needs. Our preference is to have a discussion about what your people currently are thinking, feeling, saying and doing and what would you like to change. We will create the experience to make this happen. Alternatively we have a series of one day or shorter workshops which may suit your needs.

YOUR LEADERSHIP UNLEASHED
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CREATE FAST, EFFICIENT AND EFFECTIVE TEAMS

Leading with Trust
Learn how to create trust, the one single leadership capability that changes everything with school performance. When trust is high, a team becomes a high performance team. A team that is fast, efficient, cohesive and effective.
Read more...

RELATE TO AND INFLUENCE COLLEAGUES

Leading with Personality
Learn how to capture each individual’s unique personality type to lead and manage teams. This workshop is specifically for leaders and aspiring leaders and will show you how to communicate with and influence another in a way that connects with the way that they view the world.
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CONVERSATIONS THAT WORK

Masterful Communication for Leaders
Communication is complex and demanding. Whatever their role, masterful communicators are the influential leaders and colleagues. The conversations at work that work are the ones where response matches the intent of the sender of the communication. In this workshop, learn how to master the art of complex communication.
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GREAT COACHING IS TRANSFORMATIONAL

Performance Coaching and Beyond
All coaching is concerned with accountability and performance. Good coaching includes developmental coaching where the client grows their skills through the achieving of their goals. Great coaching is transformational where it is about the goals and the skills. Learn how to be a transformational coach in this workshop.
Read more...

For more information on workshops and courses:
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CREATE HIGH PERFORMANCE GROUPS

Teaching with Trust
Learn how to create trust with your students, the one single competency that changes everything with teaching effectiveness when trust is high, student groups reach high performance. Trust is more than just liking you as a person. Trust is when they know that you are there for them with integrity and intent.
Read more...

ENGAGE WITH A COMPLETE RANGE OF LEARNING STYLES

Teaching with Personality
We share a lot of very specific personality characteristics or preferences with some students and so we find it easy to relate to them. Other students quite literally have a very different view of the world to us. This seminar is specifically for teachers and lecturers and will show you how to construct learning experiences that engage the complete range of preferred learning styles.
Read more...

HOW TO BE RESILIENT IN LIFE AND AT WORK

Get up - Dress up - Show up
Learn how to have more of those days where no matter what happens we are virtually unstoppable and in fact revel in the opportunity to manage competing tasks and resolve conflict. How would it be if you had the knowledge and skills to turn resilience on at will? What if you could model this to others so that they too could have more of the days where they ‘get up, dress up and show up’.
Read more...

HOW TO RUN YOUR OWN BRAIN FOR A CHANGE

Make your own MOJO
MOJO is that special something that when we have it we are operating at our highest and best. We are in the flow. We are in the zone. Want to know how to MAKE YOUR OWN MOJO? Want to know how to mange your own thoughts and feelings and be in the zone? Then this course is for you.
Read more...
ABOUT EARLE TAYLOR

What drives Earle is a passion for helping individuals, groups and organisations to actualise excellence.

During a thirty year career as a Queensland primary school principal, he balanced his school leadership responsibilities with extensive involvement as a workshop facilitator and coach within the broader state education community. Two years of this time were on secondment to Education Queensland International as a leadership trainer with the Supreme Education Council in Doha Qatar.

He expanded to the private sector in 1995 with the formation of his part time leadership training and coaching business which became full time in 2010.

Along with a contract with The Queensland Association of State School Principals [QASSP] as QASSP Service Officer, he currently provides leadership training and coaching to the wider educational and business sectors within Australia and overseas.

“ Your Leadership Unleashed is quite simply about facilitating individuals, groups and organisations to recognise their highest and best potentials and then taking affirmative action to make their dreams a reality. To be anything less than our highest and best is a tragedy. ”

For more information on workshops and courses:
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So what’s this about a Leader Services Officer?

Just over thirty years ago I walked up the steps of a tiny one-teacher school in country Queensland, a little nervous, but terribly excited and proud to be a Principal for the first time. I joined QASSP almost immediately.

A while ago I walked out of a considerably larger Queensland school, as Principal for the last time, appreciative of just so much. A huge component of my appreciation for a rewarding career as a school leader is the gratefulness I feel to other QASSP members. The personal and professional support that was, and is, one of the pillars of our Association has been very much part of my strength and inspiration. The value of personal strength and inspiration for school leaders has arguably never been greater than it is at present.

To be appointed as the inaugural Leader Services Officer (LSO) finds me, just as I was thirty years ago, a little nervous, but terribly excited and proud.

The LSO position sits clearly within the ‘Welfare’ pillar of QASSP. Our personal ‘well-fare’ is the rock on which solid school leadership stands. When we are ‘faring-well’ we are at our graceful and effective best. When we have the ‘inner game’ right the ‘outer game’ of life, in all of the roles we play, seems to fall into place.

We all deserve to operate at our peak, not only in our role as a school leader, but also in the many roles we perform across the broad spectrum of our lives.

Leadership is ‘an inside game’ - it starts from within. Over more recent years, I have focused my personal and professional development in the field of ‘self actualisation’. How do we create, as often as we can, those peak experiences when the inner game and the outer game are aligned and we feel totally ‘in the flow’?

As school leaders, and in life, we deserve more than just being able to ‘take the pressure’ or ‘bear up under duress’. Resilience is a stepping stone to self actualisation, it is not the destination.

Self actualisation is becoming, and being, all we are capable of becoming and being. It is awakening the potentials that lie within us to actualise excellence in the processes and products of life.

How would it be if we were able, more times than not, to operate with complete integrity, with clear intent and with all of the skillful and graceful competencies to achieve our highest and best outcome?

We all know, do we not, that there is no magic pill or quick fix to move beyond resilience (defined as pliability, buoyancy, flexibility, and elasticity) to fully self actualised states. While there is no easy path to this slippery concept of self actualisation there is, however, a smorgasbord of proactive coaching methodologies, which we can learn, apply to ourselves and offer to others.

QASSP President Hilary Backus and Management Committee have given a very clear directive that the core component of the Leader Services Officer’s role is to be available to provide individual support to members.

We are fortunate within Education Queensland to have access to a wide variety of avenues of support for the times when our resilience is being tested in some way either personally or professionally.

The LSO role provides QASSP members with an additional option for the times when you want that conversation to be quite separate to, or supplement, those avenues.

As your Leader Services Officer, I will be humbled and delighted when you make contact to have a confidential, caring and collegial conversation.

Simply leave a message on my mobile 0422 278 281 or email earle@qassp.org.au and I will get back to you fast. Professional individual support to you is the foundation of the role and my highest priority.

There is, as well as this responsive component, an invitation to branches to access my services, subject to availability, for a wide range of possibilities. To date a number of branches have booked me for informal branch visits or to facilitate half or full day workshops or longer leadership retreats. The topics and processes are always tailored to meet the outcome your branch desires.

I look forward to having a conversation with your branch or with you as an individual soon.

To contact Earle Taylor, phone: 0422 278 281 or email: earle@qassp.org.au
In this Journal, in Family Newsletters, in visits to branches and in formal and informal conversations, I hope that I have been consistent in sending very clear messages about what the evolving role of the Leader Services Officer (LSO) is and how you as an individual, or as a branch, may access my services.

The messages are:

• The core role of the LSO is to be available to provide collegial support to members. Simply leave a message on my mobile 0422 278 281 or email earle@qassp.org.au and I will get back to you as my highest priority.

We are fortunate within Education Queensland to have access to a wide variety of avenues of support for the times when our resilience is being tested in some way either personally or professionally. The LSO role provides members with an additional option for those times when you want that conversation to be quite separate to or to supplement those avenues.

As your Leader Services Officer, I will be humbled and delighted when you make contact to have a confidential, caring and collegial conversation. This is a completely free service to all members and is part of the benefit package which your QASSP membership provides.

• Branches may book my services to ‘support your success’ in whatever way you feel I may be of service. The service is free provided that:

1. The activity is organised under the banner of QASSP.
2. It involves a majority of members, or potential members, of QASSP.
3. It is basically ‘cost recovery’ and not about generating significant income for the branch.

Subject to these conditions there are theoretically no limits or boundaries (apart from time and cost) to the type of service that may be negotiated.

The mantra ‘supporting your success’ is one which I have chosen deliberately and is meant to make it clear that I have no intention of telling individuals or branches what needs to be ‘fixed’ and what I need to do ‘to’ or ‘for’ you in order to ‘fix’ anything.

The role of the LSO is to support you and your branch to actualise your highest and best outcome.

Having said that, part of that service may initially include having an individual or group conversation to clarify a well formed outcome. Clarification of goals is the first step to Goal Mastery. If we don’t know where we are going, how will we know when we have arrived?

In theory the notion of requests for my services emerging completely out of the dreams of individuals and branches is fine. Practically this may not be the case.

A number of members have indicated that it would be helpful if I could provide some information on my work experience, qualifications and areas of interest in order to help branches decide to have a conversation to explore service possibilities.

In order to stimulate conversation about how I might be of service to your branch, information has been sent to every member by email and is also available on the QASSP website, about:

• my career history;
• my academic and other qualifications; and
• examples of models of service delivery.

May I have your permission to conclude by issuing you as an individual, or as a branch, an invitation to consider the notion of personal responsibility?

To take your leadership, of self and others, to a higher level you need to take action. At some level we all know this. However to know … and not to do … is not really to know.

I urge you, as a member of QASSP, to ask the following three questions of yourself and your colleagues.

1. What do you (individually and as a branch) want to celebrate at the end of this year?
2. How will you (individually and as a branch) judge your success?
3. What is the first step (individually and as a branch) that you need to take?

Decide these things and if I can be of service I will be honoured and delighted to support your success.

To contact Earle Taylor, phone: 0422 278 281 or email: earle@qassp.org.au
Essential Coaching Skills: The skills that make for great coaching

There are numerous conversations about ‘Coaching’ occurring across Education Queensland at the present time as various trainings and structures are being established for Principal-to-Principal peer coaching arrangements.

From a QASSP Welfare perspective these initiatives are heartening as there is no doubt that when we have the skillful support of a colleague the personal and professional roles we play become not only more effective but also more rewarding.

Such arrangements beg the questions:

• What are the skills involved in coaching?
• What are the critical skills for coaching well?
• What are the essential skills that are the absolute prerequisites for coaching well?

Not everyone can coach. Coaching, like any other field or discipline, not only involves a theoretical framework, but also a skill set – a set of skills for the basic competencies within the coaching process.

Various coaching schools of thought identify such sets of skills. The Meta Coaching Foundation offers the following as the essential coaching skills that make for great coaching:

1. Active and attentive listening
2. Support
3. Quality questioning
4. Meta questioning
5. Giving feedback
6. Receiving feedback
7. Eliciting states

1. Active and attentive listening
Active and attentive listening involves a full mind-body listening so that we listen with a third-ear to both content and structure, to what is said as well as to what’s not said. It’s listening for heart, emotion, and meta levels of awareness. It is listening by pausing and using silence that gives the other a chance to be with his/her thoughts, emotions, and awareness. Such high quality listening enables the other to ‘feel heard’ and so facilitates discovery, and is actually a very special and rare experience.

2. Support
Support is being present; it is showing up for the client and stepping into this moment with the client. It is being present to the client’s emotions without trying to do anything with them. Coaching is about creating a safe and courageous space. A place where transformation can occur, and one can access the courage to speak his or her truths.

3. Quality questioning
The ability to ask fabulous and powerful questions that get to the heart of things, that open up new possibilities that influence the direction of thinking in a powerful and profound way, and that focuses in a solution-orientated way on facilitating the client is the heart of coaching.

4. Meta questioning
Moving from questions about the Outer Game and one’s immediate thoughts and feelings about such we next move to explore the frames, states and experiences about one’s inner experiences. These meta-questions direct the client to ‘step back’ into a higher awareness about beliefs, values, identity, intentions, etcetera.

5. Giving feedback
Feedback is not a judgement or an opinion. Feedback is an accurate mirror-like reflection of empirical (see-hear-feel) information. To give such high quality feedback we use as precise language as possible. We do so directly, with consideration of context, with rapport and with support.

6. Receiving feedback
In coaching we first demonstrate this as we continually receive our client’s feedback and work with it. We also work with his or her ability to receive feedback. So we ask, ‘What was the best thing you received from the session? What worked really well? What did not work all that well for you? What could have worked even better?’

7. Eliciting states
We elicit a state by inviting or evoking a mind-body-emotional state. Then we can anchor or re-anchor it. The client goes inside and accesses the best-imagined states to pursue his or her goals. The coach elicits states through a host of sub-skills: sensory awareness, gesture, tone, volume, eye movements, pacing, rapport building etcetera.

This list of essential skills is considered absolutely fundamental. Without them a coach cannot even be fully present to a client and that would undermine discovering the client’s goals, agendas, values and vision. These skills are basic for an effective coaching conversation that engages the client, enters into the client’s world and begins to get to the heart of things.

If you are reading this article then no doubt you engage in some form of ‘coaching conversation’ on a daily basis. Such is the nature of a school leader’s role.

If you would like more detail on the skills, including how you can benchmark your proficiency with each one simply send me an email.
What is the most important element in the Coach/Coachee relationship?

As ‘coaching’ becomes more widespread across Education Queensland more and more school leaders are entering into formal coaching arrangements. This may be an internal school arrangement, or alternatively, where a principal is coaching a colleague from another school as part of a regional program. In some other cases an external consultant may be engaged to coach a principal. Such arrangements where the coachee is part of a program that is sponsored by a supervisor (perhaps the principal for an internal arrangement or a senior officer for a regional program) the most important element in the Coach/Coachee relationship becomes even more critical.

Stephen M.R. Covey in The Speed of Trust asserts that there is something that is common to every individual, relationship, team, family, organisation, nation, economy and civilisation throughout the world – one thing which if removed, will destroy the most powerful government, the most influential leadership, the greatest friendship, the strongest character, the deepest love. On the other hand, if developed and leveraged, that something has the potential to create unparalleled success and prosperity in every dimension of life.

That something is trust.

We know, do we not, that to engage in a truly honest conversation with another we need to unquestionably believe that we can extend unqualified trust to them? The difficulty with a nominalisation like ‘trust’ is that it is easy to feel but can be a slippery concept to tangibly define and even more difficult to identify the specific behaviours which will build or destroy trust in a relationship.

This article postulates that trust is the foundational element to a successful coaching relationship and provides an invitation to coaches to consider Covey’s definition of trust as a tangible way to both define trust and embed behaviours to establish trust with a client.

The foundation of trust in the coaching relationship is that the coachee has a rock solid belief that the conversation is totally and completely confidential.

The only exception is where a client shares information of criminal activity or behaviours clearly in breach of the code of conduct of the sponsoring organisation. The difference between confidentiality and collusion must be made clear to your client.

With the exception of the above, as coach it is your responsibility to ensure that there is a common understanding with both the coachee and the sponsor that the coachee owns the conversation. The coachee is free to share details of any conversation with whomever they wish however the coach will in no circumstances do so. In particular the sponsor shall not directly, or indirectly, seek to draw that detail from either coach or coachee.

The sponsor has the right to:

- Establish expectations about practical components of the coaching arrangement.
- Set organisational goals and targets for the coachee.
- Have reports on practical aspects such as dates and length of formal coaching sessions.
- Aggregate data on the type (email, telephone, etc.) and extent of additional support provided to the coachee.
- Request a summative evaluation from the coachee in regard to the value of the coaching experience.
- Other organisational aspects as may be negotiated prior to the commencement of the coaching engagement.

Having set a clear and shared platform of confidentiality, the coach holds carriage of establishing and consolidating trust with the coachee.

So what is this slippery concept of trust?

Covey suggests that if we want to establish trust with another we firstly have to trust ourselves. We need to be the example of what we want to establish.

We both trust ourselves, and inspire trust in ourselves with others, when we show both character and competence. Character includes your integrity, your motive, and your intent with people. Competence includes your capabilities, your skills, your results, your track record. And both are vital.

Being a ‘good’ person is not enough to establish trust. A client needs to believe that we are competent as well as of impeccable character. We show our competence by demonstrating the highest level of professionalism in our preparation, execution and follow through with a coaching session. Nothing succeeds like success and as a client sees results we establish our track record with them.

Covey concludes that trust is one of the most powerful forms of motivation and inspiration. People want to be trusted. They respond to trust. They thrive on trust. Whatever our situation, we need to get good at establishing, extending, and restoring trust — not as a manipulative technique, but as the most effective way of relating to and working with others, and the most effective way of getting results.

To contact Earle Taylor, phone: 0422 278 281 or email: earle@qassp.org.au
WANT THE SMART ANSWERS TO A SMART START TO SCHOOLING?
ASK YOURSELF THE SMART QUESTIONS

Earle Taylor, QASSP Service Officer

At the time of writing, school leaders in Queensland state schools are being challenged at least as much, and arguably more, than at any time in history. When we review the ever-changing context in which you and your team are operating the list is long and potentially daunting.

The environmental context alone has been extreme with cyclones and flooding causing massive destruction of property and loss of life. Many school communities have almost unbelievably sad stories of tragedy unique to their students, staff and parents.

At a state and federal level the political climate is volatile and uncertain. The core business of teaching and learning with the full implementation of the national curriculum is uncharted waters. The scrutiny of education by the media is relentless. Curriculum is uncharted waters. The scrutiny of education by the media is relentless. The business of teaching and learning with the full implementation of the national curriculum is uncharted waters. The scrutiny of education by the media is relentless.

The list could go on and fill the page and by the time this article goes to print it will no doubt be even longer and potentially more challenging.

The business of school leadership has always been, and always will be, challenging and uncertain. So are there any ‘smart’ answers for school leaders?

‘Smart’ answers require the ‘smart’ questions. And while there are no doubt many specific questions that are just right for your particular context I invite you to consider the following three.

1. How do I lead and manage myself so that I can best lead others and my organisation?

Perhaps part of the answer is that smart leaders know that they need to look at themselves in order to be able to look after others. Maybe they understand the distinction between power and influence, that they only have control over their own thoughts, feelings and actions; that leadership is an inside job – it starts from within. Smart leaders continually look for opportunity in chaos and celebrate what is right rather than concentrate only on what is wrong. They accept reality and take affirmative action to change the things that can be changed, while having pragmatism about the things that (at least for now) cannot. These are the leaders who can never really fail. For the leader with this mindset there is no failure, only feedback. For them there are no wrong decisions or wrong actions, only decisions or actions that move them towards or away from their personal and professional goals.

Are these smart answers?

2. How do I lead and manage others to lead and manage themselves in service of each other and the organisation?

Smart leaders know that without relational trust there is weak communication, low clarity of purpose, few common goals and in turn mediocre results. They know that in a school community often the relationship itself is the outcome. They value the innateness of everyone (both child and adult) by virtue of their humanness and embrace the opportunity to champion dignity and respect for all. Perhaps they actively set out to establish trust with others and relentlessly restore it when it is lost. Maybe they know that the so-called ‘soft’ skills are hard to do and they do not fear the fierce conversations. Or at least they feel the fear and have the conversation anyway. Certainly they walk their talk and lead with integrity so that they trust and respect themselves.

Are these smart answers?

3. How do I lead my organisation in these challenging and uncertain times?

Perhaps smart leaders know that leadership is more than a property of persons or positions and that it is the force that binds people together and drives change.

Maybe they agree with L. Michael Hall who asserts in Unleashing Leadership (2009) that:

it is not about ego, status, title, authority, it is about making a difference, about creating value, about solving problems, about fulfilling visions. The new leadership is about building community, about facilitating and enabling the best in others, and about a purposeful difference that will last for a legacy so that everyone rallies in the feeling that they are doing something bigger than oneself.

They know that to be the very best example of this leadership is the pathway to their own, to others’ and to their organisation’s success.

Are these smart answers?

Smart leaders work out their own answers to these questions so that they know what they stand for and what they won’t stand for. And they stand up for it every day.

There is nothing smarter than that.
Elsewhere in this journal is the article ‘Your Psychology — Your Leadership’ by Dr L. Michael Hall one of the international speakers at the upcoming Combined Queensland Principals Associations State Conference.

Dr Hall asserts in that article that, ‘we need leaders who help all of us grow, learn, think and become more of what we can become’.

The invitation in his article is for you as a school leader to lead people in a way where you don’t rule over them but with them and through them so that together you all can do and be so much more than apart.

Smart leaders work with their people to set communal goals which everyone pursues with a passion because they collectively own the goals.

That’s smart is it not?

At the humanistic level it’s smart to value people and treat them with respect because that’s what we all deserve and it’s the ‘decent’ thing. Importantly it’s even smarter at the results level.

Groups that have a clear communal outcome, are enrolled emotionally and are striving for continuous improvement cannot help become better at what they do.

So what’s a smart way for you to lead in this way?

The steps of the Well Formed Outcome Conversation which follow is a strategy you are invited to explore.

1. **State the goal in positive terms.**
   - Describe the present situation and compare it with the desired future goal.
   - Where are we now?
   - Where do we want to be?
   - What do we want?
   - State it in the positive (what do we want to achieve?).
   - What are we going toward?

2. **Specify the goal in sensory based terms.**
   - What will we see, hear, feel, etc., when we have it?
   - What steps or stages are involved in reaching this goal?
   - Engage all of our senses in this description process to employ more of our brain and nervous system.
   - Have we broken down our goal into small enough chunks so that each is do-able?
   - What are the sizes of the behavioural chunks? Could the size possibly overwhelm us?

3. **Specify the goal in a way that we find compelling.**
   - Is the goal compelling? Does it pull on us?
   - Make it a compelling future representation. (When we see your goal, make sure we see ourselves having obtained our goal.)

4. **Run a quality control check on our goal to make sure it is for us in all areas of our lives.**
   - Is the desired goal right for us in all circumstances of our lives?
   - Is our goal appropriate in all of our personal relationships?
   - What will having our goal give us that we do not now have?
   - What will having our goal cause us to lose?
   - Is our goal achievable?
   - Does it respect our health, relationships, etc?
   - Run a quality check to make sure that our goal fits every part. Ask, ‘Are there any parts of me that objects to actualising this desired goal?’ If so, address those unconscious frames of mind.
   - Pay attention to how each of our whole selves responds to the question in terms of images, sounds, words, and sensations within us.

5. **Self-initiated and maintained.**
   - Is the goal something that we can initiate and maintain?
   - Test our goal by asking if it is something that we have within your power or ability to do.
   - Is it within our control?
   - Our goal must be something that we can initiate and maintain. It must not be something dependent on other people. Make sure that our goal reflects things that we can directly affect.
   - Is it self initiated and maintained?

6. **State the context of the goal.**
   - Where, when, how, with whom, etc. will we get this goal?
   - Is the goal appropriately contextualised?
   - Test our goal by applying it to a context: when, where, with who, etc. to make sure that it is going to be fitting and appropriate. Readjust our goal to make sure that it fits.

7. **State the resources needed to achieve the goal.**
   - What resources will we need in order to get this goal?
   - Who will we have to become?
   - Who else has achieved this goal?
   - Have any of us ever had or done this before?
   - Do we know anyone who has?
   - What prevents us from moving toward it and attaining it now?

8. **Evidence procedure.**
   - How will we know that our goal has been realised?
   - What will let us know that we have attained that desired state?

For more information on this and other coaching strategies search: Meta-Coaching Foundation, and International Society of Neurosemantics.
THE THREE ‘HOWS’ OF MEMBER WELLBEING

Earle Taylor, QASSP Service Officer

As QASSP Service Officer, part of my brief is to directly support the wellbeing of individual members and to be available to assist Branch Service Officers to establish structures and processes at a local level. When I am invited to visit a branch and talk about member wellbeing I generally invite the people present to ask themselves three ‘How’ questions.

These are:

1. **How** is member wellbeing (including my own) in our branch?
2. **How** do we know?
3. **How** can we enhance wellbeing?

The conversation goes something like this:

1. **How is member wellbeing (including my own) in our branch?**

When you are at a meeting or other QASSP activity and you think about your branch, who specifically do you think about? Do you mean the members who come to most meetings or activities? Do you expand that thinking to include people who are financial members but rarely or never participate in meetings or activities? Or do you expand your thinking to include all of the potential branch members in your area?

My invitation for you to consider as you ask yourself and each other the first **how** question is to expand your thinking of ‘branch’ to include all potential members of your branch.

And who are the potential members?

Firstly include all classified officers from primary, secondary and special state sectors. Do you think also of secondary HOD’s as well as HOSES and GO’s from all sectors? Do you think of HOC’s? Do you think of teachers in acting roles or who are aspiring leaders? Do you think of past service members?

Importantly do you think of yourself?

So as you now think of yourself and this very broad group, what is your best guess about wellbeing?

Consider wellbeing as a scale of 1-5 where one (1) is you can hardly drag yourself out of bed to face the day and five (5) is a work life that is so rewarding that you would almost do it for nothing. Where are you on this 1-5 scale and what is your best guess as to where others in this group are?

The first how is an important question and a good base for reflection and leads into the second question.

2. **How do we know?**

This is a powerful question and invites us to consider what processes we have in place to monitor, manage and take personal responsibility for our own wellbeing. It also begs the question that if you weren’t faring too well would anyone know? Would someone be there for you if they did know?

If I or my colleagues aren’t travelling at our best do we notice? Does our branch have processes and structures in place so that we do know and then seek or extend support?

Every branch is different and often people are surprised as they start to list the informal and formal ways that they extend collegial support to each other, just how much there is in place.

We intend to post on the QASSP website a list of the strategies and processes that each branch has in place, to allow for sharing and celebration. When your branch has this discussion simply send your summary of strategies to me at earle@qassp.org.au and they will be posted.

The discussion leads to the final **how**.

3. **How can we enhance wellbeing?**

What are we currently doing that we must make sure we continue to do?

What are we not yet doing that we could?

What would an organised support structure for all potential members look like in our local area?

How can we make this happen?

How can this be made sustainable?

How can we contact and offer support to all potential members?

What are the barriers and how can we overcome them?

What if?

How?

I would love to be invited to come to your branch and be part of a discussion like this. Failing that, I will be delighted to plan an agenda topic with your Branch Service Officer (and perhaps with other interested members) over the telephone and provide support in that way.

Service (collegial support, networking, wellbeing) is one of the three pillars of QASSP, and one of the main reasons that many of us became, and continue to be, members. Let’s make sure member wellbeing is a recurring agenda item and high on our branch priorities.

Contact Earle when: you have a challenging situation or issue; or know of a colleague facing challenges; when you wish to set yourself goals; or simply feel like having a chat to explore possibilities. Email earle@qassp.org.au or telephone 0422 278 281.
Have you ever known a very negative person? Those who, no matter what may happen, interpret the event in the worst possible way; or someone who can talk for hours about how they are a victim of a work relationship or situation, a parent or their childhood – individuals who are lost in their personal life story. As a consequence, their story occupies their mental focus because it occupies their language, and their future simply repeats their past.

Most of us have been temporarily stuck in a situation like this at some time. A situation where part of us knows that the way we are thinking about the situation is unresourceful and we just wish we could think differently about it. This is often easier said than done. Have you ever attempted to shift the way you think by just thinking differently? While it is possible to do so, often this is a lesson in futility. The easiest method of changing the way we think is by changing our language.

When we say negative thoughts aloud we embed them more firmly into our habitual thinking patterns. If we are constantly expecting the worst, talking about our fears, imagining the future cloaked in possible failure, we draw those experiences toward us. Alternatively when we constantly think about, and speak about, success, possibility and abundance we direct our subconscious mind towards that goal. The thoughts that we dwell on, feel to be real and our language accordingly, are the principal programming agents that guide our life’s successes and our life’s failures.

Our subconscious mind takes our language literally and personally. Language is one of the principal ways we program this power within us:

- Thoughts become words.
- Words become feelings.
- Feelings become actions.
- Actions become results.
- Results create reality.

What we think, speak and feel about we bring about through the actions we take. By being alert to the language that we use we can interrupt the reflexive thinking and feeling patterns that give rise to unresourceful patterns of behavior. Here are a few examples of language upgrades for when we catch ourselves saying negative thoughts aloud.

Instead of choosing words that focus on the negative and limit choice such as:
- I can’t.
- I want to.
- I’m not.
- I should.
- I have to.
- I need.
- I must.
- I hope.
- I’ll try.
- I don’t know.

Upgrade to alternatives that focus on the positive and extend choice such as:
- I can.
- I am.
- I commit to.
- I am able to.
- The alternatives are.
- I choose to.
- I’ll think about that.
- My choice is to.
- One option is to.

These are just a few upgrades to words that place the power outside of our personal choice. Disempowering language choices keep our attention falsely fixated on the perspective that other people and external circumstances direct our lives.

Be alert to the words we use and upgrade limiting language. By upgrading our language we automatically shift our thinking and the emotional states which develop from that thinking. Our behaviour and results follow the emotional states we sustain.

\textit{In this way we word our world.}

Email earle@qassp.org.au or telephone 0422 278 281.
Want to develop wellbeing? 
Start with a core of trust.

As leaders, if we are to grow our own wellbeing and create a working environment that supports the wellbeing of others, then one of the critical skills we must develop is a core of trust – a core of trust in ourselves that extends to everyone around us.

The core of trust, according to Stephen M.R. Covey in *The Speed of Trust* is a combination of both character and competence.

We can hardly ‘be well’ if we can’t respect ourselves, if we don’t demonstrate character. Character being to operate with personal integrity and honourable intent.

To be feeling well in our role we also need to know that along with being a good person we are also doing a good job, that we have competence. Competence meaning we have the demonstrated capabilities to perform our leadership role as evidenced by a proven track record of results.

So how do we actually ‘do’ trust? We make sure that people see and hear our integrity, especially those who can’t do anything other than listen.

**1. Talk straight**
Be honest. Tell the truth. Let people know where you stand. Use simple language. Call things what they are. Demonstrate integrity. Don’t manipulate people or distort facts.

**2. Demonstrate respect**
Genuinely care for others. Show you care. Respect the dignity of every person and every role. Treat everyone with respect, especially those who can’t do anything for you. Don’t fake caring.

**3. Create transparency**
Tell the truth in a way that people can verify. Be open and authentic. Err on the side of disclosure. Operate on the premise of ‘What you see is what you get.’ Don’t have hidden agendas.

**4. Right wrongs**
Make things right when you are wrong. Apologise quickly. Make restitution where possible. Demonstrate personal humility. Don’t cover things up. Don’t let pride get in the way of doing the right thing.

**5. Show loyalty**
Give credit freely. Acknowledge the contributions of others. Speak about people as if they were present. Don’t disclose others’ private information.

**6. Deliver results**
Establish a track record of results. Get the right things done. Accomplish what you are hired to do. Don’t over-promise and under-deliver. Don’t make excuses for not delivering.

**7. Get better**
Continuously improve. Increase your capabilities. Be a constant learner. Develop feedback systems – both formal and informal. Act on the feedback you receive. Thank people for feedback.

**8. Confront reality**
Address the tough stuff directly. Acknowledge the unsaid. Lead out courageously in conversation. Don’t skirt the real issues. Don’t bury your head in the sand.

**9. Clarify expectations**
Disclose and reveal expectations. Discuss them. Validate them if needed and possible. Don’t violate expectations. Don’t assume that expectations are clear or shared.

**10. Practice accountability**
Hold yourself accountable. Hold others accountable. Be clear on how you’ll communicate how you’re doing – and how others are doing. Don’t avoid or shirk responsibility.

**11. Listen first**
Listen before you speak. Listen with your ears – and your eyes and heart. Find out what the most important behaviours are to the people you are working with. Don’t assume you know what matters most to others.

**12. Keep commitments**
Say what you are going to do, then do what you say you are going to do. Make commitments carefully and keep them. Make keeping commitments the symbol of your honour.

**13. Extend trust**
Appropriately extend trust to others based on the situation, risk, and credibility (character and competence) of the people involved. Have a propensity to trust. Don’t withhold trust because there is risk involved.

Of these behaviours are some more important to you than others? Are some a particular strength? Are there others that you are not so comfortable with? If you had to choose three that you would like to overhear someone say about you, what would they be?

When we behave in ways that allow us to both trust ourselves and engender trust in others it cannot help but strengthen our personal wellbeing and in turn make an enormous difference in all aspects of our personal and professional life.

As we lead and manage our own wellbeing so do we lead and manage the wellbeing of others and of our organisation.

If you would like to know more about how to develop and apply this crucial leadership skill register on the QASSP website for your closest workshop ‘Building High Performance Teams Through a Culture of Trust’.
GET UP, DRESS UP, SHOW UP:

Resilience strategies for leadership and life

Why is it that some days are one of those ‘bring it on’ sort of days where no matter what happens we are virtually unstoppable and in fact revel in the opportunity to manage competing tasks and resolve conflict? Why is that there are other days where those same competing tasks and conflict situations are a source of stress and it is a test of our resilience to ‘get up, dress up and show up’ to face the day.

How would it be if you had the knowledge and skills to create more of the first kind of days for yourself? What if you could turn resilience on at will? What if you could model this to others so that they too could have more of the days where they ‘get up, dress up and show up’ with vitality regardless of the challenges?

This article invites you to come to a definition of resilience; to understand the stages of resilience and to explore one strategy to install a resilient state.

Resilience is what puts ‘bounce’ within us giving us a sense of energy and focus. Resilience is what enables us to operate from a passionate love for what we do and puts a spring in our step. Resilience is what empowers us to quickly and immediately bounce back from setbacks and disappointments.

We need resilience because we live in a world where things can and do go wrong, where things knock us down, where expectations are violated, where the rules of the game can completely change, where hurtful things occur, where shocking and even traumatic things sometimes occur, where we can experience a mental and emotional shock, and where our hopes and dreams can be knocked down so that we need to re-invent ourselves.

For these and other reasons, we all need an inner core of stability that gives us a sense of resilience.

To live in a full and vigorous way, we have to have the sense that we can handle set-backs and challenges. If we don’t, we typically begin living our lives on the defensive, avoiding danger and risks, fearful of what might happen, always on the lookout for problems and difficulties.

The strategy of becoming resilient typically follows five stages.

1) The Setback Stage

Something happens that knocks us down, that sets us back financially, physically, in a relationship, business, career, etc. We experience the triggering event as negative, hurtful, and undesired. It is an event that creates a feeling of stress.

2) The Emotional Roller Coaster Stage

If the set back is a surprise, we feel shocked and may go through the ‘grief process’ of shock, bargaining, anger, depression, and acceptance. We experience an emotional up and down about the set back, accepting/rejecting.

3) The Coping Stage

We begin to cope with things, surviving, putting our world back together. The internal and external actions that we take address the set back. We begin gathering up resources – internal ones and external ones.

4) The Mastering Stage

We move beyond mere survival to mastering things, reclaiming our vision, renewing our sense of power and energy, getting back our passion and dreams.

5) The Recovery or Come Back Stage

This is the stage where we can say, ‘I’m back!’ One of the foundational strategies to move us through the stages is to deliberately install an optimistic state of mind, an attitude of putting the most favorable construction or spin on people, events, happenings, and actions.

An optimistic state of mind has self talk like:

- This is temporary about this particular time/person/situation it is not forever.
- It is about this particular contextual situation it is not about everything in my life.
- The problem is external to me it is not all about me.
- I am solution powerful.
- I am response-able for my own thoughts/feelings/words/ actions.
- What is the first of many actionable steps I can take?
- There is no failure only feedback.

Adverse events (adversity) alone do not ‘make’ us feel bad, depressed, angry, fearful, or make us victims or victors. It is our explanation of adversity, or our explanatory style, that does that.

What self talk would enable you to use the optimistic explanatory style to induce you into a more resilient state?

The primary source of this material is from a complete two-day workshop on the Neuro-Semantics of Resilience by Dr L Michael Hall. Twilight sessions as well as one day and the complete two-day accreditation program can be delivered locally by arrangement.
BEYOND RESILIENCE: Using ‘negative’ emotions to advantage

In the previous journal I wrote about how to ‘get up, dress up, show up’ using resilience strategies to overcome the barriers of negative emotions. This article invites you to take that notion of resilience to a higher level:

• To firstly accept the so-called ‘negative’ emotions as a natural part of what it is to be human.
• Then to move beyond mere acceptance to embrace the full range of emotions as a source of productive energy.

So what is the one big emotion that we all want to experience and feel? Of all the emotions, which one do we most desire?

If there’s any common response to these questions, at least in Western culture, it is ‘I just want to be happy.’ As a result it is common for people to think, ‘If only I could be happy, everything would be okay.’ And so lots of people live their lives in the pursuit of happiness.

There’s a paradox in pursuing happiness. Pursue happiness directly and happiness will evade you. Stop chasing happiness and focus on doing something that engages you fully, makes a contribution to others, and that you find meaningful, and happiness will be yours.

Beyond that ‘happiness paradox’, there are several other problems with focusing exclusively on happiness. One problem that arises from over-loading ‘happiness’ as the most important emotion and the only one worth pursuing is that it tempts us to discount all of the other emotions. We may stop caring about the other emotions and even try to avoid them.

Yet if we are to be emotionally intelligent and whole, we need all of the emotions. This includes the negative ones as well as the positive ones. We need them all in order to be whole. Without the capacity to experience the full range of human emotions — we cannot be fully alive and able to effectively handle the challenges of life’s experiences.

The so-called ‘negative’ emotions are important for us to know when to ‘stop, look, and listen’ for what may be going ‘wrong’ in our world and to make needed changes.

For example when there’s a loss of something important in life, it is normal and natural to feel sad. Sadness helps us to recognise the value of the loss. It tenderises our heart. It enables us to recognise what’s precious in life. And it motivates us to do the ‘grief work’ and then replace what we have lost.

Anger is important to recognise a violation of your values. The subsequent energy gives us the backbone to stand up for ourselves and fight for our values. Without that ability we would not stand up for ourselves. Others would learn to walk over us.

Fear is another example of an important emotion as it allows us to recognise a danger or threat to our values and us.

Of course, all emotions can be distorted and erroneous. They need to be checked for accuracy and usefulness.

Over-loading ‘happiness’ as the most important emotion tends to reduce our ability to tolerate the other emotions. And without emotional tolerance we tend to reject our emotions, avoid them, defend against them, deny them, and use all kinds of defense mechanisms and this, of course, in the long term creates blindness to our emotions.

Emotional tolerance enables us to work through the experiences of life without getting stuck by hating, resisting, and fighting a symptom — a particular emotion that we dislike. The fact of life is that when we’re engaged in any challenging project, there will be setbacks, disappointments, moments of anxiety and stress, and therefore the need for patience and persistence.

All professions can no doubt relate to this and those of us who work in the emotionally charged field of educational leadership can perhaps relate to this more than most. If we, as educational leaders, don’t have the emotional tolerance and acceptance of negative emotional states, we can become stopped or blocked by them.

The real solution is simple. Accept an emotion as an emotion, tolerate it as just tension in the body, and explore the meanings creating the emotion in the first place. Then find more effective ways to deal with the emotion. The key to changing any self-destructive behaviour is to be willing to allow or tolerate the feelings that the behaviours are blocking then use the energy to take effective action. Embracing the full emotional range makes us human as educational leaders. Welcome them and use all of them to advantage.

This article draws directly from ‘Neurons’ a series of weekly articles by Dr L. Michael Hall, Executive Director of the International Society of Neuro-Semantics. To receive a free subscription to ‘Neurons’ go to www.neurosemantics.com
FROM THE
SERVICE OFFICER

Earle Taylor
To contact Earle Taylor, phone: 0422 278 281 or email: earle@qassp.org.au

STRONG LEADERS: Building leader wellbeing and capability through collaborative networks

QASSP currently budgets $50,000 for the Service Officer role and over recent years there have been ongoing strategies to secure sponsorship support to extend the service. This has finally been successful. Previous communications to State Council and direct to members have informed that DETE has provided an additional $75,000 to support QASSP in establishing a ‘Strong Leaders’ program.

DETE has supported the initiative in recognition of QASSP’s belief that an investment in leader wellbeing and capability is an investment in effective school leadership.

DETE and QASSP are in agreement that strong leadership and strong personal wellbeing are closely related. Leadership is ‘an inside job’ it starts from within. Strong, resilient school leaders provide the very ‘an inside job’ it starts from within. Strong, resilient school leaders provide the very best support for staff, parents and students.

Leaders first lead themselves in order to lead others and in turn to lead their school community. The stronger the leaders – the stronger the school.

The initiative will assist in:

• Expanding the level of direct support and training from the QASSP Service Officer.
• Assisting individuals (particularly those in rural, remote, and small schools) in forming or joining a network. Individual school leaders who do not wish to form a network may access support directly with the QASSP Service Officer or a delegate.

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The initiative will assist in:

• Providing face-to-face workshops at the local level based on periodic needs analysis. Face-to-face workshops are to be provided in rural, remote areas at close to or at metropolitan prices.

The momentum for the initiative is well underway with the first cohort of Branch Service Officers participating in the inaugural training program in Brisbane on 31 October and 1 November 2013. This was truly a landmark event being the first ever training for Branch Service Officers.

I had the pleasure of co-facilitating the training with President Hilary Backus. Specialist input came from Steve Francis of Gr8 People, Michael White of Aus Identities, psychologist Lawry Scandar of Osiris Group and John Webster who chairs the Service Portfolio for QASSP.

Congratulations and thanks to the inaugural participants from: Townsville, Ingham, Burdekin, Tablelands, Rockhampton, Central Queensland, Mount Isa, Logan, Sunshine Coast South, Brisbane West, Ipswich, Brisbane South, OEEC, Gold Coast North, Gold Coast South, Beenleigh, Maclntyre and Beaudesert branches.

A comment from one participant is typical of the evaluations:

This initiative is an opportunity to greatly enhance the support networks for school leaders across the State. Something like this has been needed for a long time.

We are a diverse state and how we ‘build leader wellbeing and capability through collaborative networks’ will vary greatly depending on your local context. This may be particularly true for rural and remote locations.

I implore you to support your Branch Service Officer as they investigate with you the ways (under the banner of QASSP) that will work best for you and your colleagues. They will promote and facilitate consultation. The degree of local success will be determined by your individual and collective engagement.

The remaining cohort of BSOs will be trained in Brisbane on 27 and 28 February 2014. We look forward to having your branch represented at that training if you were not part of the inaugural cohort.

The Strong Leaders program is undoubtedly an opportunity to further establish QASSP as the champion of leader wellbeing and capability right across Queensland.

Branch Service Officers are invited to attend Strong Leaders Training in Brisbane, 27 & 28 February 2014.
Travel and accommodation provided. Contact magdalene@qassp.org.au
Will 2014 be just the NEXT year or a truly happy NEW year?

Will this new year of 2014 be a new year for you? Or will it just be the next year? The only way it will be new is if you make it new; otherwise it will just be the next year, 2014. New implies ‘different from what has been occurring.’ So if your experiences in 2013, your emotions, your activities, behaviours, skills, responses, relationships, etc. were not exactly what you ‘just want more of’, then make them different.

For the year of 2014 to be new, there’s something that you have to do. You have to create some new frames, new meanings, new movies in your mind, and new outcomes to go for. Have you done that? Will you do that? And while you do have the power to do this (all humans do), you will only actually achieve this by taking control of your goals. That’s the real secret to how to have a happy New Year.

Steps for a Happy New Year

1. State the goal in positive terms.
   Describe the present situation and compare it with the desired future goal.
   Where are you now?
   Where do you want to be?
   What do you want?
   State it in the positive. What do you want to achieve?

2. Specify the goal in sensory based terms.
   What will you see, hear, feel, etc., when you have it?
   What steps or stages are involved in reaching this goal?

3. Specify the goal in a way that you find compelling.
   Is the goal compelling? Does it pull on you?
   Make it a compelling future representation.
   When you see your goal, see yourself in the picture where you already have what you want.

4. Run a quality control check on your goal to make sure it is good for you in all areas of your life.
   Is your goal appropriate in all of your personal relationships?
   What will having your goal cause you to lose?
   Does it respect your health and relationships?
   Run a quality check to make sure that your goal fits every part.

5. Check that it can be self-initiated and maintained.
   Test your goal by asking if it is something that you have within your power or ability to do.
   Is it within your control?
   It must not be something dependent on other people.

6. State the context of the goal.
   Is the goal appropriately contextualised?

Engage all of your senses in this description.
Break down your goal into small enough chunks so that each is do-able.

7. State the resources needed to achieve the goal.
   What resources will you need in order to get this goal?
   Who will you have to become?
   Who else has achieved this goal?
   What prevents you from moving toward it and attaining it now?

8. Evidence procedure.
   How will you know that your goal has been realised?
   What is the final step that is proof that you have got what you want?

May 2014 be much more than a next year, may it be a new year for you!

As your QASSP Service Officer I offer members a complimentary telephone session to help you clarify your goals. I look forward to your call.

From the Service Officer

EARLE TAYLOR
Service Officer
QASSP

To contact Earle Taylor, email: earle@qassp.org.au

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May 2014 be much more than a next year, may it be a new year for you!

As your QASSP Service Officer I offer members a complimentary telephone session to help you clarify your goals. I look forward to your call.
QASSP, in partnership with DETE, is about to officially launch the Strong Leaders initiative. Replacing and extending past programs like Principals Connect, the Strong Leaders initiative is open to QASSP members as well as all classified officers and aspiring leaders in the primary sector.

Specifically this means that if you are a Principal, Deputy Principal, Head of School, Head of Special Education, Head of Curriculum, a Guidance Officer, or are aspiring to one of these classified positions, QASSP is encouraging you to consider supporting your own wellbeing and that of your colleagues through a supportive network of colleagues.

The initiative is based on the presupposition that strong leadership and strong personal wellbeing are closely related. Leadership is ‘an inside job’ it starts from within. Strong, resilient school leaders provide the very best support for staff, parents and students.

Leaders first lead themselves in order to lead others and in turn to lead their organisation. The stronger the leader – the stronger the school.

Simply put, the days when you feel strong within yourself are the days when you are most likely to be most effective and in turn to find the job most rewarding. An investment in your personal wellbeing is an investment in your leadership effectiveness that flows through to a broad range of outcomes for students, staff and community.

Not only do you as a leader deserve to feel on top of your game but your school community deserves to have the very best version of you turning up every day.

We know that at the end of the day it is each of us individually (and only each of us individually) who can take responsibility for what we think, feel, say and do. Our internal thoughts and feelings and our external words and actions are our personal responsibility.

As much as we might like someone else to be able to magically ‘happy’ us or for us to be able to magically do the same for others we know at some level that this cannot occur.

While this recognition of personal responsibility is true, it is also true that if we work in a warm, supportive and encouraging environment, an environment where we have colleagues who are both empathetic and challenging we are likely to regain our wellbeing more quickly and are more likely to maintain it. Also when we reach out to support another we can in turn be a catalyst for their return to strength.

This is the essence of Strong Leaders – that each and every primary school leader and aspiring leader will be part of a supportive collegial network where members regularly check on each other and challenge others to operate at their peak.

Service, which encompasses wellbeing, is one of the three pillars of QASSP. (The others are Leadership and Advocacy.) Indeed it is the notion of collegial support, which was the main reason why many of us joined QASSP in the first place and why we remain members.

QASSP is delighted to have the opportunity to champion and promote collegial networking for all leaders and aspiring leaders in the primary sector of the Office of State Schooling.

With the financial support of DETE, QASSP has provided professional learning for 42 of our Branch Service Officers (BSOs) from branches across the state. By the end of Term 3 this year, once again with the financial support of DETE, we will induct an additional 20 BSOs. This time we will focus particularly on rural and remote areas of the state. Many of our branches cover vast areas and our aim is to have additional highly skilled BSOs in those areas.

Your Branch Service Officer’s role is not to take responsibility for everyone’s wellbeing. This is neither possible nor desirable. Their role is to encourage you and your colleagues to take personal responsibility and to actively create a network should you not have one.

As an initial step QASSP shall soon be officially launching the initiative and offering ways that we can support you and your colleagues. I encourage QASSP members to lead the way.
Beware of Cognitive Distortions. You may have heard it said that there is no reality only perception. Put another way we create what we believe to be true or real about a situation and while it is real for us someone else may have a completely different truth or reality about the same situation.

The invitation of this article is to suspend the way you perceive a situation and to step back and examine whether you are allowing toxic cognitive distortions to filter out resourceful choices in how you might respond.

The Neuro Linguistic Programming (NLP) Model of Communication (Figure 1) explains how each of us creates our own reality.

We are continually exposed to a plethora of external stimuli. Based on a wide range of personal filters we each take those stimuli of outside events and pay attention (or don’t pay attention) to various components to make our individual movie of the mind about the event.

The movie of the mind becomes a total mind/body/emotion experience of thoughts and feelings and total physiology. This prompts us to respond (or not respond) to the outside event through words or actions.

The more we are able to understand the model the more we are able to introduce choice and personal power over our internal powers of thinking and feeling and our outside powers of words and actions.

The way we filter and interpret outside events largely determines our reality.

A significant filter is what we believe to be true consciously or unconsciously. If we have robust and healthy ways of making meaning it is empowering. Our style of making meaning can also be sick and dis-empowering. Cognitive distortions are the thinking patterns that we use in constructing meaning, which dis-empower us.

These are mostly the more primitive ways of thinking that we learned as children.

Yet when we use these ways of thinking and reasoning as adults, we inevitably create ill-formed and inaccurate mental models that imprison us in non-sense and limiting possibilities. These comprise our meaning construction and explanatory styles.

There are many forms of cognitive distortions. A baker’s dozen of the most common are:

1. **Over-generalising** Taking only a few facts or none at all and jumping to a premature conclusion about...
something and assuming it to be true without question.

2. **All-or-nothing thinking** Polarising at extremes, hence, black-or-white thinking. Either-or thinking that posits options as two-valued choices, either this or that. There are no other choices, nothing in the middle. Aristotle spoke of this as the ‘excluded middle.’

3. **Labeling** Assuming that if we use a name or label, that label accurately describes things. Name-calling is using generalisations to reduce reality to just a word. It confuses a verbal map with the territory.

4. **Blaming** Accusatory thinking that transfers blame and responsibility for a problem to someone.

5. **Mind-reading** Projecting thoughts, feelings, intuitions onto others without checking our guesses with the person, over-trusting our ‘intuitions’ about other people and seeing them through the lens of our mental filters rather than checking out our interpretations and assumptions.

6. **Prophesying** Projecting negative outcomes into the future without seeing alternatives or possible ways to proactively intervene.

7. **Emotionalising** Taking counsel of one’s emotions as an information source for reality, assuming that if we feel something, it must be real and we must act on that feeling.

8. **Personalising** Perceiving circumstances and actions of others as targeted toward oneself, perceiving the world through the ego-centric filter that everything, or most things, are about us.

9. **Awfulising** Imagining the worst possible scenario and then amplifying it with the word ‘awful’ (as in ‘This is awful!’) without any real sense of what awful actually refers to.

10. **Should-ing** Using the words ‘should’ or ‘must’ to pressure oneself and others to conform to our rules.

11. **Filtering** Over-focusing on one facet of something to the exclusion of everything else, a tunnel vision perspective, filtering out the positive, solutions, etcetera.

12. **Can’t-ing** Imposing semantic limits on oneself and others using the word ‘can’t’ which presupposes that there is some law or rule that constrains us from doing something.

13. **Discounting** The mental attitude of rejecting and/or putting down by dis-qualifying possible solutions, successes, or possibilities.

When we look at the diagram for the NLP Model of Communication the message at the bottom says, ‘Changing anything changes everything in the model.’ Awareness of how we create our individual perceptions of reality is the first step in taking control of our mind/body/ emotional state and responding to a situation in a resourceful way.

As you take a tongue in cheek look at the 13 common Cognitive Distortions which are you highly skilled at? Which ones are you so expert at that they happen at an unconscious level?

Beware of deception and the most insidious form of deception is self-deception. To your highest and best in creating thoughts, feelings, words and actions that best serve you.

**The source of this material is a two-day workshop on the Neuro-Semantics of Resilience by Dr L Michael Hall.**

Twilight sessions as well as a whole day workshop can be delivered locally by arrangement. To explore options contact Earle on mobile 0422 278 281.

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**DETE COUNSELLING SERVICES**

DETE now provides a free and confidential counselling service for all staff and their immediate family members.

QASSP commends DETE and the Organisational Health Unit for this initiative. It provides all DETE staff and their immediate family members with access to up to four counselling sessions per calendar year (1 January to 31 December). The initiative is very much aligned with QASSP’s belief that leadership of others begins with leadership of self.

In addition to the advice, support and referral services provided by Employee Advisors based in regions, DETE has engaged external Employee Assistance provider, Optum (Telephone: 1800 604 640) to provide counselling and support to all DETE staff.

A specialist telephone service also exists for those with supervisory responsibilities, called Manager Hotline. Managers and principals can obtain confidential advice about difficult and complex staff and organisational issues. This can be accessed also by telephoning 1800 604 640 and following the prompts.

Optum has been engaged to provide free, confidential, short-term counselling and referral services. Appointments for face to face, telephone or video counselling can be made by contacting Optum’s 24/7 contact centre on telephone Ph: 1800 604 640. Optum has a large number of counselling associates located across the state in all major regional areas and in many smaller centres for face to face appointments. They also have offices in Mount Gravatt, Chermside, Surfers Paradise and the Brisbane CBD.

Optum’s Live and Work Well website offers a large range of information and resources for staff to access. Appointments for counselling can also be made through this website by going to My Programs and Services. To log into this site, simply enter the Access code: DETE into the Members: Access Anonymously section of the home page.

Employee Advisors are available to discuss all work or non-work related matters and are able to provide consultancy advice about employee or organisational issues and work collaboratively with principals and schools to improve the organisational health and performance of staff.

For more information about this service contact your Regional Employee Advisor or the DETE Central Office Organisational Health Unit on 3513 6564. You may also contact QASSP Service Officer, Earle Taylor, Mobile 0422 278 281.
CREATIVE LEADERS: How to unleash your creativity through a state of ‘flow’

Just as the term leadership defies easy definition so does the term creativity. It follows that when we combine the two the task of defining ‘creative leadership’ becomes exponentially more challenging. Rather than attempting to define the characteristics of creative leaders this article strives to provide personal strategies on how to create and enter a state of creativity.

The literature is full of rich sources of how to access your inner creativity and include among many others Eckhart Tolle’s concept of being in the ‘now’, Chris Argyris’ ‘double loop learning’, Dr L Michael Hall’s elaboration on ‘accessing personal genius’ and the subject of this article which is Dr Mihalyi Csiksentmihalyi’s concept of ‘flow’. A brief exploration of the flow state along with strategies to create it follows.

Flow is defined as that personal state where there is just the right balance between the level of challenge we feel and the level of skill we feel we have to meet the challenge of the task.

As you can see from the diagram, there’s a point where the level of challenge is high and the skills that you have to meet that challenge are also high, and it is at that point that you enter the flow state.

The interplay between how challenging an activity is and your skill level in that activity can make you feel as follows:

- Apathy (low challenge, low skills)
- Boredom (low challenge, mediocre skills)
- Relaxation (low challenge, high skills)
- That you’re in control (somewhat challenging, high skills)
- Worry (somewhat challenging, low skills)
- Anxiety (challenging, low skills)
- Arousal (very challenging, mediocre skills).

In order to achieve the flow state you need to:

- **Set a clear goal**, which is both challenging and achievable. You want to be very clear on what you want to achieve and how you’ll know whether you’re succeeding. Here’s an example: ‘I’m going to write a ten point action plan of how I am going to increase the level of trust in my organisation and what people will be thinking, feeling, saying and doing in this high trusting environment.’

- **Focus completely on the task at hand.** Eliminate all other distractions. If you have something that is blocking you emotionally deal with it first or give yourself permission to ‘park’ it and come back to it later. You don’t want anything to take your attention away from the task that you’re performing; if your concentration is broken you’re going to exit the state of flow.

- **Make sure that you’ve set aside sufficient time.** It’s very likely that it’s going to take some time to get into the flow state, and a while longer after that until you’re fully immersed. Once you enter the flow state you want to make sure that you make the most of it, instead of having to stop prematurely because you have to go do something else.

- **Monitor your emotional state.** If you meet all of the requirements above, but you’re having trouble entering the flow state, take a break, have a snack, listen to some music. Return when your body sends you the ‘I’m ready’ message. While the more you practice, the more expert you will become, it is not something that can be forced. To unleash your creativity you need to let go and quite literally ‘go with the flow’.

A workshop which further explores the concept of ‘flow’ and how to access it effortlessly, can be arranged locally on request. Contact your QASSP Service Officer for details.
Want to be an influential communicator?
Use ‘colourful’ language

Have you ever wondered why you can relate easily to some colleagues and not to others? Do you know why some people seem to speak your language even at your first meeting while with others you almost seem to be speaking a completely different language even though you are both using English words?

We share specific personality characteristics or preferences with some people and so we find it easy to relate to them. Other colleagues quite literally have a different view of the world to us.

This article will explain some of these personality differences and will give you an insight into why and how other people are different to you and help you to understand and work with those differences. Specifically it will show you how to communicate with and influence another in a way that connects with how they view the world.

One way of exploring personality differences is through the Myers Briggs Type Inventory (MBTI) in which we may identify our four-letter type though splitting whether we have a preference for:

- (E) Extroversion – (I) Introversion
- (S) Sensing – (N) Intuition
- (T) Thinking – (F) Feeling
- (J) Judging – (P) Perceiving

From this emerges our four-letter type as one of the following sixteen combinations.

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The sixteen types can be clustered in different ways to provide insights into commonalities and differences in the way that each of us creates our own reality.

Michael White from AusIdentities provides rich information about how we view the world through the cluster of the four temperaments:

### Eagle NT
- ENTJ, ENTP, INTJ, INTP

### Kangaroo SP
- ESTP, ESFP, ISTP, ISFP

### Wombat SJ
- ESTJ, ESFJ, ISTJ, ISFJ

### Dolphin NF
- ENFP, ENFP, INFP, INFJ


To further enhance an appreciation of difference, Michael overlays the four temperaments and the sixteen types with four ‘colour’ communication styles. This shows someone’s preferred or natural choice of words to give and receive information.

In a similar way to the temperaments the sixteen types are clustered into four groups:

- **Green Communicators**
  - Kangaroos (SP)  
  - ISTP, ESTP, ISFP, ESFP

- **Yellow Communicators**
  - Dolphins (P) & Eagles (P)  
  - INFP, ENFP, INTP, ENTP

- **Blue Communicators**
  - Eagles (J) & Wombats (T)  
  - INTJ, ENTJ, ISTJ, ESTJ

- **Red Communicators**
  - Wombats (F) & Dolphins (J)  
  - ISFJ, ESFJ, INFJ, ENFJ

To discover your four-letter type for free go to [www.yourleadershipunleashed.com](http://www.yourleadershipunleashed.com) under personality tests.
In addition to the information from the temperaments, a knowledge of someone's preferred communication style gives an insight into the language that they use with others which in turn provides advice on the language to use if you want to effectively communicate with, and influence them.

See the following table for insights into how to communicate with influence:

**Green Communicators — Kangaroos (SP) ISTP ESTP ISFP ESFP**

**How Green Communicates**
- Focus is on the present moment & what is going on around them
- Highlights facts & details
- Uses very literal terminology
- Tends to give detailed explanations
- Uses words like – real, do, fun, did, saw, said, and heard. May use hands to illustrate points or give directions

**To Communicate with Green**
- Use real life examples if possible
- Try to be specific about things like time, shape, taste & colour
- Complete one sentence before moving onto another
- Start with the details first, then move into the bigger picture
- Give clear & specific instructions

**Yellow Communicators — Dolphins (P) & Eagles (P) INFP ENFP INTP ENTP**

**How Yellow Communicates**
- Focus is on the future & what is or could be possible
- Highlights concepts & theories
- Uses very global terminology
- Likes to use generalisations and metaphors
- Uses words like – imagine, ideas, inspire & dream

**To Communicate with Yellow**
- Try to look beyond the reality of the situation & imagine what is possible
- Do not overwhelm them with too many facts or details
- Allow them to explore their ideas
- Start with the big picture first, then start to outline the details
- Give only general instructions

**Blue Communicators — Eagles (J) & Wombats (T) INTJ ENTJ ISTJ ESTJ**

**How Blue Communicates**
- Tends to debate points, using logic to convince other people
- Highlights the supporting data
- Uses logical explanations
- Gives orders & sequences their thoughts
- Uses words like – think, criteria, logical, priority & outcome

**To Communicate with Blue**
- Debate & challenge them
- Present your facts logically and make sure you stay objective
- Be direct and to the point
- Recognise & affirm their competence or good ideas
- Give opinions & be prepared to defend them or back them up

**Red Communicators — Wombats (F) & Dolphins (J) ISFJ ESFJ INFJ ENFJ**

**How Red Communicates**
- Focus is on connection with the people around them & on harmony
- Highlights feelings & the impact of actions on others
- Uses very personal language
- Tends to be quite subjective
- Uses words like – value, relationship, feel & personal

**To Communicate with Red**
- Try to establish a rapport using personal language
- Outline the potential benefits for the people in the organisation
- When giving feedback, always try to be tactful & supportive
- Acknowledge them for their valued input & suggestions
- Gently talk through any issues

While there are many other filters which work together to create someone's individual model of the world, personality type is a significant contributing factor. When we ‘colour’ our words to match someone’s preferred language we enter into their model of the world. This is the sphere of influence.

What a great reason to use ‘colourful’ language.

For expert information on personality type email michael@ausidentities.com.au

Your QASSP Service Officer is available to provide a suite of workshops on influential communication. Email earle@qassp.org.au
Innovation requires *knowing* what to do and *doing* what you know

My Mother used to say, ‘If wishes were horses beggars would ride’. Stephen R Covey may have a trifle more academic clout however I feel he made much the same point when he said, ‘To know and not to do is not to know.’

The theme of this article is that while innovative leadership is clearly about dreaming of things that go beyond mere creativity to completely new ways of thinking and imagining it is also about the leadership competency to make that dream a reality. It is about closing the knowing/doing gap.

So how does an innovative school leader do both? How can an innovative leader create a clear and contextual vision as well as strategically manage the creation and consolidation of that vision?

The ‘Well Formed Outcome’ questions of Neuro-Linguistic Programming and Neuro-Semantics provide a sequential path to not only creating an innovative vision but also making it real. The twenty questions provide a sequential path for the leader to coach a group through an innovation. The innovative leader continually challenges the implementation team with clarity, context, creation and consolidation questions.

**CLARITY QUESTIONS**

1. **What do we want?** This is a succinct statement, framed in the positive, rather than what we don’t want.
2. **How do we represent what you want?** What will we see, hear, feel and witness when we have what we want?
3. **Why do we want it?** Why power drives willpower. If there is a big enough reason then the energy to start and maintain the implementation flows.

**CONTEXT QUESTIONS**

4. **Where do we want it?** This is the specific detail of the context groups and situations that the innovation is targeted to benefit.
5. **When do we want it?** A goal without a deadline is just a dream. Every goal needs to have a specific and realistic target date.
6. **Who of us (and others) will create it?** This is the building of accountability and commitment to specific tasks.

**CREATION QUESTIONS**

7. **What do we have to do to get what we want?** This is a critical point in the questions. Here is the detail of what specific actions will take the dream and make it real. Without action there will be no change.
8. **Who will take responsibility for doing these things?** Linking back to Question 6, where specific people are allocated to specific tasks.
9. **Can we do these things?** This is a reality check question and an affirmation of capability.
10. **Have we tried these things before?** The lessons that we can take from past successes and failures.
11. **What are the steps and stages we need to follow?** Here individual actions begin to come together.
12. **What is our implementation plan?** The actions consolidate in a clearly articulated plan then holds each and everyone to account.
13. **Are there any obstacles to achieving our outcome?** Forewarned is forearm. The obstacles are the things out there as well as the internal obstacles in individuals and the group.
14. **How will we monitor our plan and keep on track?** Not for just when things go wrong but how will we build in the time to review, realign and celebrate in a systematic way?
15. **What are the internal and external resources we will need?** These are the tangible and intangible resources within the group and an analysis of what needs to be sourced from outside.
16. **(Revisit Question 3) Do we still have a big enough ‘why’ to achieve our outcome?** This is a critical readiness question. Without a big enough ‘why’ the ‘will’ will fade.
17. **Is the goal ecological for all aspects of our school community?** What is at risk here? What do we need to preserve?
18. **Are we ready to do these things?** This is a call to commitment and accountability to not only start but to follow through.
19. **How will we know when we have achieved our outcome?** What is the final proof that we have got there?
20. **What is the starting/next action step?** At the beginning and at each checkpoint what actions/by whom/ and by when, is required to be explicit.

The questions are designed to be sequential initially and then held in consciousness throughout the course of the implementation of the innovation. The Well Formed Outcome questions have been adapted from the work of Dr L Michael Hall, International Society of Neuro-Semantics.

**EARLE TAYLOR, Service Officer, QASSP. To contact Earle Taylor, email: earle@qassp.org.au**
From the SERVICE OFFICER

Service into the future

I am taking the opportunity in my final article as the inaugural QASSP Service Officer to reflect on the broad notion of ‘service’ and what it means for QASSP. Also to issue a challenge to further develop ‘Service’ as one of the Association’s three pillars (along with Leadership and Advocacy).

‘Service’ has replaced what was formerly ‘Welfare’. This is a deliberate strategy to emphasise that while support for leader wellbeing is for when each of us might be in a fragile state it is also about helping all of us to move beyond ‘okay’ to the highest levels of resilience. Another way to say it might be, ‘Service is not just about helping us when we feel weak it is making our might be, ‘Service is not just about helping us when we feel weak it is making our strong, stronger’.

An overview of ‘Service’ across our Association

All QASSP members currently have:

• direct access to the QASSP President for personal and professional support
• a Management Committee Liaison contact for each branch
• a Service Portfolio team on Management Committee that has a wide range of functions and includes the activities of the QASSP Service Officer
• Branch Service Officers in nearly every branch whose role is to keep member wellbeing on the local agenda
• recognition of members through a series of awards culminating in Life Membership
• branch visits for general and exceptional circumstances
• a QASSP Service Officer who currently provides a variety of services/functions.

The current role of Branch Service Officers

Each QASSP branch has one or more members who undertake to perform the duties of ‘Branch Service Officer’ (BSO). The core role of the BSO is to promote and develop collegial support among QASSP members and to encourage members to extend support to all other primary leaders and aspiring leaders in state primary education across Queensland.

It is true that the ultimate responsibility for personal wellbeing (the maintenance of helpful thoughts/feelings/words/actions) is an individual one. QASSP believes it is also true that a network of empathetic and challenging collegial support adds strength to a leader’s capacity to maintain (and regain where necessary) this sense of personal wellbeing.

Each BSO makes a commitment to:

• Ensure the topic of wellbeing is high on the agenda of every gathering of QASSP members and promote the value of collegial networks.
• Provide individual collegial support to colleagues at levels they are comfortable to provide.
• Refer colleagues with significant wellbeing concerns to the QASSP Service Officer and encourage others to do the same.

Member wellbeing is regarded as a communal responsibility and while BSOs are the ‘cheerleaders’ of leader wellbeing in the Queensland state primary sector, they are one part of the solution.

The past role of the QASSP Service Officer

As the inaugural QASSP Service Officer, I:

• provided one-on-one collegial coaching for members
• liaised with the QTU to provide mutual and consistent support for members
• called individual members where an issue/tragedy involving their school community appeared in the media
• called groups of members affected by a natural disaster or event
• provided ‘self leadership’ professional development workshops to branches and at conferences and other gatherings
• facilitated training for Branch Service Officers
• networked with relevant State Schooling Officers and developed collaborative partnerships
• provided general assistance to branches on request and/or perceived need.

Service into the future

At the August State Council in Cairns delegates provided valuable feedback on each of the aspects above. The feedback showed strong appreciation of the existing structures and support roles that are in place across our organisation. There was also a clear message that we need to keep improving existing roles and practices.

This is a challenge not only for the Service Portfolio of Management Committee but also for branches and to each of you as an individual.

I am both humbled and proud to have been the inaugural QASSP Service Officer and while I no longer hold the title I will always be a member and a colleague. My phone number has remained the same (0422 278 281) and my email is no earle@yourleadershipunleashed.com

I will always be honoured should you ever want to talk something through. After all we are there for each other. Isn’t that very much a part of what being a member of QASSP is about?