

# Finding Simplicity Workbook

NESA Fall Leadership Conference 2017

Principals Preconference

Wednesday, October 18, 2017

Abu Dhabi

## Finding Simplicity within Complexity



BEHAVIORGAP.COM



Teresa Arpin, President  
Transformation Systems  
Skype: Arpin3  
Mobile: 616-633-6608  
<http://www.TSLTeam.com>



Ronald Lalonde  
River's Path Coaching  
Skype: ronlalonde  
Mobile: +971 052 219 3255  
[riverspath.com](http://riverspath.com)

# An introductory message from Teresa and Ron:

As our schools work to live their missions and transform teaching and learning, principals can find themselves in a vortex of complexity. The change processes designed to improve our schools may make sense, but they also have far reaching and sometimes unforeseen impacts on existing structures and relationships.

How do we identify priorities among competing initiatives in trying to leverage system changes? Is there space for innovation while being mindful not to overload our teams? How do we maintain momentum, and, also know when to let go of things?

Our goal is for participants to observe the complexity of their schools from new perspectives, allowing for new ways of operating. This one-day preconference will create a space to reflect together, to learn from one another, and to contribute to an emerging understanding of how to find simplicity and coherence within the complexity of our schools.

**Target Audience:** Principals, all levels

**Prerequisites:** In preparation, participants are asked to read *The Thin Book of Trust* by Charles Feltman (Thin Book Publishing: Bend, Oregon, 2009). Participants will also be asked to complete an online survey to help the facilitators understand questions that are driving your learning.

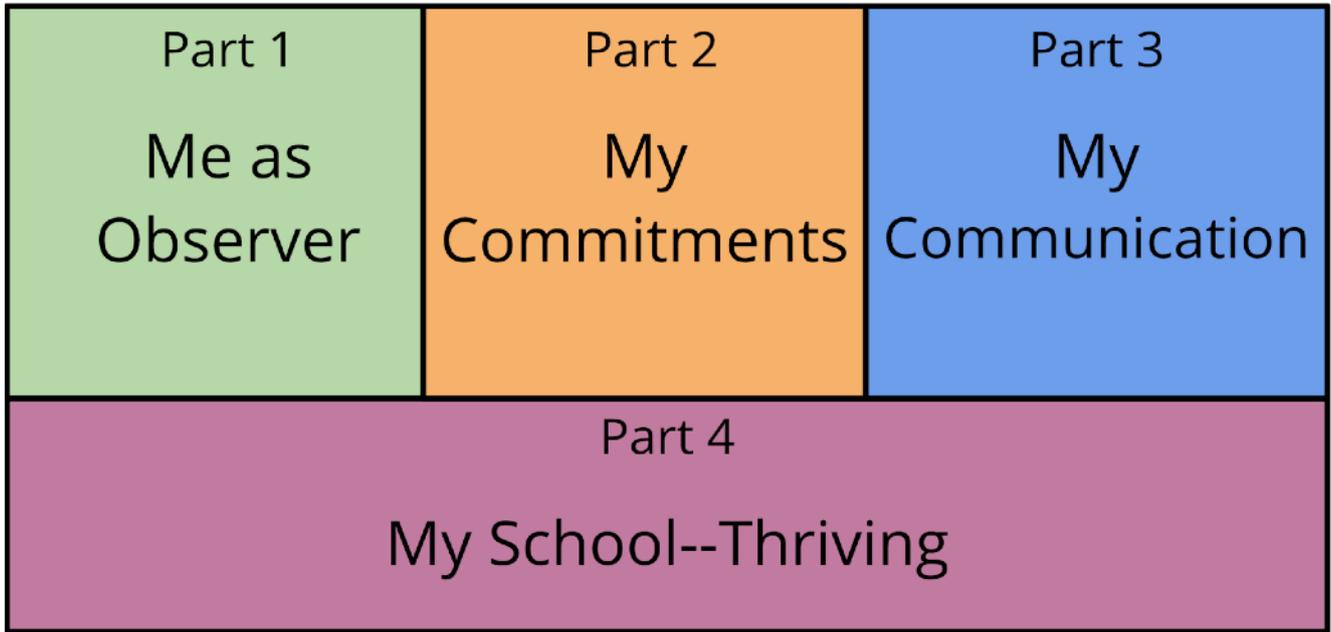
## Outcomes

### Participants will. . .

- Learn how to see broader possibilities for action by questioning underlying judgments and enlisting the support of others.
- Understand the essential elements of successful commitments so that leaders and their teams can build relationships of greater trust in their schools.
- Manage school commitments to promote coherence, clarify school identity, and provide rationale for letting go of the non-essential.

## NESA Continuum Levels: 3, 4

- *Initiating Implementation* (setting structures, developing skills, piloting practice, scaffolding support)
- *Extending Implementation* (reflecting, evaluating, modifying practice, improving skills).



*Notes*

# Part 1: Me As Observer

**Outcome:** understand that we make meaning and the meaning is in us

**Introductions:** Interview a Table Partner/ Table Partner Introductions

## Instructions

*First, individually, write some notes regarding your observations about the questions below.*

*Next, you will partner with someone at the table, and, as partners, you will take turns asking each other the questions and carefully listening to your partners responses. Then switch roles.*

*Finally, each person will take a turn introducing their partner to the table group.*

For all of us, there are ups and downs in leadership, so let's focus on one of the most memorable "high points" in your leadership thus far. When was a time you felt most engaged, alive, and effective? How did you use your energy to build a better organization, to create a better experience?

1. Tell the story. When and where did it happen? Describe what happened and how you contributed. What made this experience a high point? What were your feelings? What did you overcome?
2. What qualities or strengths did you exhibit in the performance of this task?
3. What are some challenges you are currently facing in your leadership role?
4. What are your hopes for today's work together?

# Sense making happens within us

Notes

# Ladder of Inference

Notes

# Mindfulness



Mind Full, or Mindful?

# Why mindful?

Go back to the situation we referenced before our mindfulness activity.

Do you see things any differently now?

Are there opportunities to shift your thinking?

Are there new actions you can take?

## Doors Closed/ Doors Open: A Reframing Activity

Think about a time in your life where someone rejected you or you missed out on something important or when a big plan collapsed. These would be points in your life where a door closed. Now think about what happened after: what doors opened after? What would have never happened if the first door didn't close? Write as much detail as you can bring to mind.

**The door that closed on me was:**

**The new door that opened for me was:**

# Doors Closed/ Doors Open: A Reframing Activity (cont'd)

**Questions:** Each response will be a one minute timed write in response to doors closing/ doors opening

1	
2	
3	
4	
5	
6	

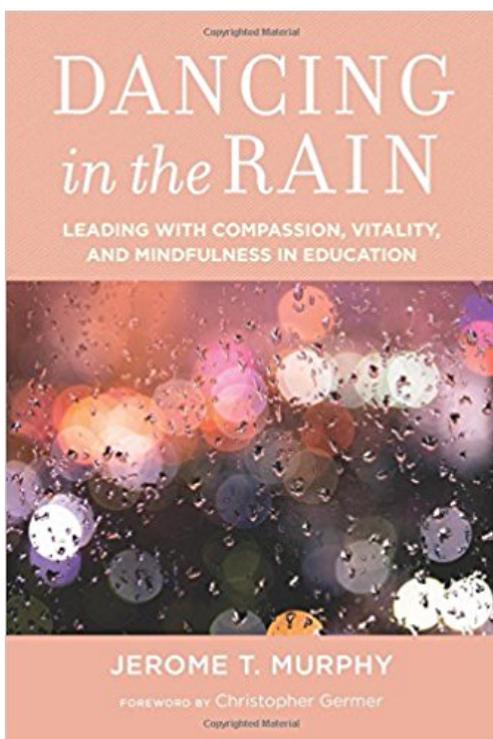


# Immunity to Change

Notes

# Competing Commitments

Notes



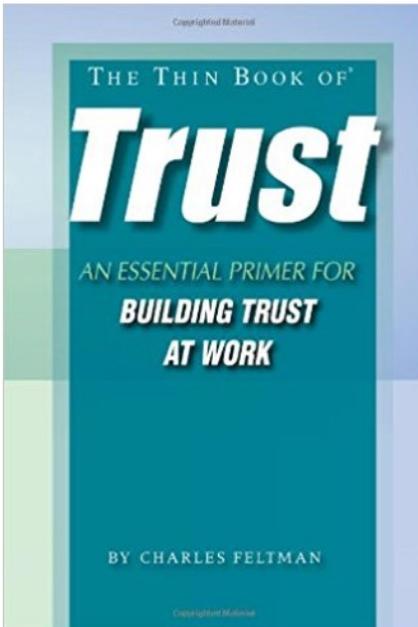
Resisting	
Ruminating	
Rebuking	

# Reflection

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for a student to write their reflection. The box occupies most of the page's vertical space below the title.

# Part 3: My Communication

**Outcomes:** Understand that much of the mischief that occurs in our school worlds comes from the way we make and manage commitments



*Trust is  
choosing to risk making something you  
value vulnerable to another person's  
actions.*

--Charles Feltman

## 4 Distinctions of Trust

Sincerity	
Reliability	
Competence	
Care	

# Where is the trust? Triad activity

## **Scenario 1**

You told me that you thought the new advisory program was a really good idea. I keep hearing that in team meetings, when I am not present, you regularly bring up the idea that we have too many initiatives, that you are stressed by all this additional work to deal with something that isn't even a core subject. You have told people that you just skim over the lesson plan at lunch, twenty minutes before you are supposed to implement it with students.

## **Scenario 2**

Your enthusiasm for volunteering is inspiring. You actively put your hand up to lead student council and to organize events for students outside school. Several teachers, parents and students expressed their enthusiasm and wanted to help out. I sent them your way since I thought you could use the extra person power. Now students are in my office saying that they want to quit student council because the teacher advisor hasn't been present for the last two meetings and students are tuning out their student leaders.

## **Scenario 3**

I know you would like to be a team leader. I think growth would be good for you. We both know that I have had to come to you on numerous occasions about the gradebook, deadlines, putting scores in the right place. Putting you in a position in which new teachers rely on you for information on how to work within our school's systems really gives me pause.

## **Scenario 4**

Our team building activities at the start of the year are an important way to introduce new teachers to our school and to help them build relationships. I know you would like to take care of family business before you have students in classes, and I appreciate that you like to minimize disruptions to the school year. We have committed to this orientation program and these activities because we think they are critical to the success of our school. Creating and sustaining a positive atmosphere among our faculty is what makes this school a great place to work. Orientation activities create a space in which we can renew our commitment to one another and be open to including new teachers.

**Six things to do before the conversation:**

1. Are you willing to talk about it?
2. Identify the assessments you are concerned with in the aspects of
  - Sincerity
  - Reliability
  - Competence
  - Care
3. Define the standard you are using.
4. Identify the specific actions or behavior.
5. Determine what you need from them in order for them to regain your trust.
6. Ask the person if they are willing to have a conversation about your concern.

*By taking it out from under the umbrella of trust and distinguishing it as the specific issue, this team leader was able to initiate a constructive conversation about her real concern.*

*–Charles Feltman*

# Part 4: My School--Thriving

## Outcomes:

- To make new commitments
- To be accountable for new commitments
- To know who and how to ask for help

## Goal buddies

A goal buddy is a form of social support. In a goal buddy system, two people (buddies) operate together as a unit to monitor and to help each other reach a goal. Buddies are responsible for each other. A buddy can be anyone, like a friend, co-worker or family member. The idea behind a buddy system is that achieving a goal is easier when there is another person that can keep you motivated and accountable. Moreover, having someone with whom to share your struggles and successes can make the work easier and the mission less intimidating.

## New Commitments

Goal	Check In Date	Buddy