A HEART THAT LEADS...A HEART THAT SERVES...

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Educational leaders play an essential role in affecting the climate, attitude and reputation of their schools. They are the keystone on which learning communities function and grow. With successful school leadership, schools become effective incubators of learning, places where students are not only educated but challenged, nurtured and encouraged.

As school principals or school heads we are one of these educational leaders who were given great opportunities to offer utmost service to our clienteles. We are given a chance to lead people but we have to remember that leading others is a privilege that is earned, not a right. Leaders who understand that leading others is a privilege understand that leading, first and foremost, is about service.

“A heart – led leader serves others. They epitomize servant leadership. They are humble. They are genuine and sincere. They are transparent and vulnerable. They measure success not just on spreadsheets but on the amount of impact they (and their organizations) have on others. “Tommy Spaulding

Authentic leaders, Spaulding says, live and lead from the heart. The values and principles that guide the lives and shape the ability to lead others is far more important than the title, or the ability to crunch numbers, or the impressive degrees that leaders display on their walls. To effect true transformational change, heart-led leaders draw on the qualities of humility, vulnerability, transparency, empathy and love.
If we want to lead with a heart we must think of others and learn to serve them in the best way that we can because true leadership is not about ourselves, it’s about others.

Each one of us can lead and serve with a heart. Here are some ways on how we can do it...

1. Listen to our heart. We have to listen with our heart. We have to take a look inside to see the true values and morals that are embedded within. We have to know what our vision for life and work is. What kind of life, work environment and relationship do we want to have? Where we would like to see or make a difference?

Many leaders base their actions on what others say and not on what is inside them. When they do this, they can have regrets because they didn't stand for what they believed in their heart was the right thing for them to do. If we listen to our heart, it will be easier to follow it and live accordingly. We will be creating a mission and a vision we and others can follow.

2. Value connectedness. Recognize that everything is connected. What we do for others, the service and support we make, will eventually serve the common good. Leading from the heart is about relating, having conversations, working together and caring for the people we lead.

3. Create positive relationships. Leadership is a relationship. We can affect how positive or negative is the environment in our workplace by the way we create relationships. Encouragement, positive words, being available, listening, getting to know our people, providing excellent service, are some of the ways positive relationships are created and sustained.
4. Build Trust. Relationships don’t flourish without trust. Trust is the backbone of high-performance teams. If we want trust we need heart. Trust invites participation, which is so important for innovation and productivity. Most employees simply need to be invited to participate and then positively reinforced when they do. However, employee participation only works in an environment of complete and unconditional trust.

5. Be Authentic. Being authentic is living a life that is strongly connected to one’s belief system. It’s being true to ourselves, our values, and convictions. Authenticity has to do not only with speaking the truth, but most broadly presenting ourselves in a genuine way; being without pretense; taking responsibility for our feelings and actions.

6. Be Caring. Caring means sincere interest in and genuine concern for others. It includes consideration, compassion, empathy, sympathy, nurturing and altruism. Caring mean seeing humans as the most important resource in an organization, and the resource with the most overall potential.

If we as leaders treat our followers with caring behaviors such as understanding, appreciation, attention, courtesy, loyalty and encouragement, we will be rewarded with supportive and cooperative behavior in return.

When we lead with our heart, stakeholders are sure to be affected, both inside and outside our school. Putting people first is the key to unleashing the full power and ingenuity of employee teams, superior clientele service, strengthened client relations, and closer and more productive relationships with all other school stakeholders.

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