DIFFERENT STROKES FOR DIFFERENT FOLKS

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Authoritarian

Democratic

Laizzes Fair

Transformative

Strategic

Which type of a leader do you have?

It is very safe to say that teachers are among the individuals who deal with innumerable people all throughout their lives. Each year, they spend time with different students, new and old colleagues, non-teaching staff, parents, LGUs, NGOs and, of course, their very own immediate superior, better known as the “school head”.

Among the aforementioned, the school head has the most dramatic impact on the teachers’ day-to-day activities. Although they spend most of their time with the pupils, it is the School Principal or the Head Teacher that greatly influences their plans, actions and even intentions for each day; simply because the leader is in the position to do so. He has direct connection to each and every person in the institution.

With the very demanding set up of school procedures today where the school heads and teachers become “jacks of all trades”, stretched in order to accomplish their tasks on time, it becomes inevitable that the latter divert their attention to the one who
directly assigns them those assignments – the former. Despite the teacher’s preparation of his own to-do-list for the day, besides the tasks that they ought to accomplish as a typical classroom manager, everything “freezes” when the school head asks then to do something especially when the word “urgent” is within the instruction.

With this kind of dilemma, teachers tend to develop the feeling of disgust, exhaustion, frustration and resentments to their work and, needless to say, to the school head who is just doing his or her job. These extra burdens, especially when given inappropriately or untimely, lead to conflicts between the two parties. This common scenario happens more often in an organization when a new school head comes in and everyone is still in the phase of adjustment. Teachers tend to misinterpret, misjudge, over-think, over-react, criticize and compare.

Comparing might be one of the most common actions done by teachers as subordinates. They compare their previous superior with the present one, the experiences and dealings they had with them, and so with the kind of treatment the current school head gives to each and every colleague. Every word the leader utters is quoted and every action he or she does is observed. It is but expected that the school head will have different approach for every individual. The only question is, “How do teachers interpret the leader’s different ways or approach to each and every subordinate?

As human beings with different levels of understanding, experience and character, differences in interpretation is accepted. However, this could lead to varying conclusions and reactions. Negative speculations, like the existence of favoritism, the interest-bound favors, and too much familiarity between the school head and a few particular teachers hinder the other members of the organization from seeing the truth. Those who receive less favorable treatment resort to wrong judgments which then make their dealings with their immediate superior somewhat bitter, uncomfortable, and cold. This kind of school head-teacher relationship can directly affect the latter’s performance in school.
One of the significant factors behind this varying approach of a leader towards his or her subordinates must be dependent primarily on how teachers perform their duties and responsibilities in school. It is but a human nature to give back what we receive and to reap what we sow. The line “different strokes for different folks” implies that the approach of a school head to his or her teachers is proportional to the kind of workers they are. A worker who shows diligence, commitment, professionalism, and good work ethics towards his or her job will definitely receive a good feedback and favorable treatment from their superior, and vice versa. If this is not the case and the school heads do otherwise, the leaders must be missing within them the must-haves and the principles of work ethics and good human relations.

We dictate the kind of treatment we receive from others. We don’t ask for it; we work for it.

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