



ESA Spotlight Series

Perspectives
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September 2017

INspired Leadership

Professional development is expanding at ESSDACK, a central Kansas service center, by providing leaders an INner look at how they lead and how it impacts others through a movement called INspired Leadership.

By Rachel Thalmann, M.Ed., Certified Professional Coach, INspired Leadership, ESSDACK

Organizations, beginning with individuals, are hungry for authentic speech, for connection and improved relationships, and for interactions that are empowering and uplifting.

More than ever people in education are feeling the effects of burnout, and 8 percent of teachers are leaving every year (Westervelt, 2016). That's approximately 200,000 teachers walking away from the profession each year. There are attachments to outcomes, uncertainties of the future, and blame or excuses toward the system itself creating a perfect storm of judgment and helplessness. It can be exhausting. It can be fearful. It can also be an opportunity to discover what is being done to cope...and then shift from merely coping to leading from the integrity of our truest self.

Why does that matter? Because we get to decide whether our navigation through life is working for us or against us. Once that is recognized, the impact is clear that leading oneself directly impacts leading others.

INspired Leadership – An INner Look

Professional development is expanding at ESSDACK, a central Kansas service center, by providing leaders an INner look at how they lead and how it impacts others through a movement called INspired Leadership. So often schools are measured by performance driven by standards, outcomes, and data. These are only external results. A true picture of a school's performance also includes values and norms, perspectives and attitudes. The place where these can be measured is "IN" a person – their outlook and worldview. The work begins from the INside of an organization outward, beginning with superintendents, to principals, to faculty and staff. What leaders convey affects others, so an INside approach comes first.

According to Gallup, engagement at work has barely budged in over a decade, and as of 2016, only 32% of Americans report feeling engaged, and worldwide it is even less: 13% (Gallup, 2016). INspired Leadership addresses internal conditions of individuals impacting engagement and satisfaction. Although most of our work takes place in educational settings, INspired Leadership is about wellbeing and the realization of the truest self of any individual in any role. It is about waking up from sleepwalking through a job, a marriage or relationship, and even traffic and daily tasks.

INspired Leadership is about wellbeing and the realization of the truest self of any private or professional role. It is about waking up from sleepwalking through a job, a marriage or relationship, and even traffic and daily tasks.

INSPIRED Leadership provides opportunities like 2-day workshops; on-going, self-paced work done alone, in pairs, or groups; individual or group coaching with certified professional coaches (IPEC, Institute for Professional Excellence in Coaching); Energy Leadership Index Assessment including data and debrief, social media interactive groups, 30-Day mindset challenges, and book studies.

Groups and individuals learn about Energy Leadership, developed by Bruce Schneider, including catabolic and anabolic energy (Schneider, 2008). The lens from which people view each other, themselves and their circumstances can be catabolic, which is draining because it's through a filter of fear or anger for example. If their view is anabolic, it is uplifting and highly conscious. These types of energy make up what Bruce Schneider calls the 7 Levels of Energy (Schneider, 2008).

Imagine a dimmer switch for your overhead lights. If the switch is all the way down, it is dark and your view is limited. This is like Level 1, highly catabolic energy. As the dimmer switch moves upward, the light begins to get brighter and brighter and the visibility and view improve. It is easier to make decisions and understand what is going on when the light is fully on. If the switch is all the way to the top, this is like Level 7, highly anabolic.

Each level is indicative of particular emotions and beliefs. For example, a leader with mostly Level 5 energy would view life as a "win-win" and strive to create an environment that is beneficial to themselves AND others. In some circumstances, between parents and children for example, there are times when leading with Level 4 energy occurs. That means the view in that particular moment is "you win," and energy and attention with love toward the children feels best, whether it benefits the parent or not. Overtime, people who lead with Level 4 energy will likely burn out due to giving and giving without expecting something in return. There are benefits and drawbacks to each level, which is why awareness of how an individual leads by default, leads to less catabolic energy.

If a leader's default, or stress reaction mode, is Level 1, highly catabolic, they may feel sadness, worry, fear or judgment at times as a conditioned response to external triggers (think of the dark room with the light off). Understanding what triggers create this type of energy is pivotal in lessening the amount of time spent viewing life through that lens, and also helps to respond consciously rather than react.

As a person goes through the day, his or her dimmer switch moves up and down throughout all seven levels of energy. Everyone experiences them all. Becoming aware of these states of mind, attitude, and clarity helps people make conscious decisions about how they want to think and act. It is a tool of empowerment, showing leaders how they are consciously, or unconsciously leading themselves, how that changes under stress, and most importantly how that is impacting others. (Attachment 1 is the first page in our workbook with more information about Bruce Schneider's 7 Levels of Energy.)

The Energy Leadership Index Assessment (ELI) is a snapshot of inner conditions, displaying individual data of the 7 Levels of Energy. This tool is indicative of how new tools, strategies, and methodologies will be implemented, or how they will likely be met with resistance.

An Average Resonating Level (ARL) of energy is calculated with the ELI, providing an overall indicator of success in work and life. A person's ARL can increase when they become more conscious of how their thoughts impact their emotions and actions, and then choose to redirect their energy in more beneficial ways.

With quantitative data through an Energy Leadership Index assessment (ELI), individuals are able to see the filter through which they lead: their thoughts transmitted into energetic responses or reactions (Schneider, 2008). The attitudinal assessment raises consciousness and creates the opportunity for individuals and organizations to objectively view their results of inner growth, directly impacting all external goals.

Administrators, counselors, teachers, and staff also walk away with the same language to communicate effectively about how they are showing up and how that is impacting each other. Cultures change because external conditions, which are usually the focus of growth and change, are being led by INner work.

Meet Tammy, Elementary Specialist of School Redesign

Tammy was part of a group of 23 educational leaders who spent a year developing professionally and personally through INspired Leadership.

Tammy describes “fixing” problems that most leaders experience daily:

“I’ve been an educator, instructional coach and parent for over 25 years. My job is to motivate and encourage people, but there has always been something missing in my skill set. Sometimes as I would talk with people, I would think I was helping them only to have them come back time and time again with the same issues. My office felt like a revolving door of people with complaints and problems they wanted me to fix. It was exhausting and frustrating,” she admits.

Tammy participated in two days of training, monthly coach-facilitated group support, three months of individual coaching, and a self-paced book study. She describes her big aha, “What I learned through INspired Leadership training and coaching is there’s a difference between being helpful, and trying to micromanage someone else’s life...and I was guilty [of micromanaging].”

“I was able to work with a coach to talk through work situations because I wanted to be able to choose my level of energy and engagement instead of letting things just ‘happen’ to me,” she says. “It has helped me to see opportunities, embrace change with enthusiasm, and support others as they solve their own problems. And that is the real help and care people need from me.”

Organizational Culture

So what happens when leaders begin to get out of their own way? Relationships are built, authenticity increases, and interaction becomes empowering and uplifting.

As schools absorb mandates from local government to Washington D.C., how leaders respond professionally, personally, and privately plays a huge factor in the overall culture of those they influence. Likewise, how leaders respond to their own personal financial, relational, or wellbeing issues for example, also plays a factor in the culture of those they influence.

Countless external strategies, methodologies, and technologies are at the fingertips of the educator, but where is the support for wellbeing? In preparation for the classroom, there is a gap impacting everything: a person’s inner state.

When experiencing frustration, anger, self-doubt, worry, fear, or agitation, decision-making and interactions with others are affected both privately and professionally.

Wearing a mask to cover these emotions creates harmful long-term effects, and hiding privately won’t stop it from oozing out professionally, and vice versa.

What does the Work Look Like?

Personal and professional coaching for an adult is like an IEP for a student in that it is individualized. This type of support makes room for individual goals and addresses what kind of energy might be holding someone back, how that is impacting his/her leadership, and how to lead from levels that are more beneficial. Coaches are trained to coach energy,

believing individuals are their own expert at what is creating fear, worry, and doubt, and what is creating joy, freedom, and peace.

Administrators are setting an example by holding themselves accountable to be stretched and challenged to not only lead themselves well, but to acquire and practice skills to communicate consciously and empower others.

Meet Marsha, Director of Special Education

“On a personal level,” she shares, “the coaching sessions have given me the ability to lead this organization with insight, energy, and clarity.”

All staff participated in three full days of training, monthly group support facilitated by a certified coach, individual coaching sessions, and an organizational playbook.

“Inspired Leadership has breathed renewed enthusiasm into our district,” Marsha states. “Positive commitment, re-established trust, and better performance are outcomes of Inspired Leadership training in our district.”

Marsha shares her experience in getting the entire staff on the same page, “Training and coaching for all groups of employees and administration creates an overall expectation of an anabolic nature. Our organization is now future forward thinking.”

Meet Crystal, Technical Assistance Coordinator

Crystal coordinates a network of leaders who provide services and resources to assist educators and families to implement evidence-based practices that have a positive impact on students across the state.

“As the coordinator of this network,” she says, “one of my responsibilities is to ensure we develop and retain the highest quality providers. One challenge for me is to find opportunities to challenge and further develop these highly skilled leaders.”

She explains why she chose INspired Leadership, “I was drawn to INspired Leadership as a result of some of our providers being exposed to the content and telling me about it. Upon further exploration, I determined this could be a vehicle to support all the providers regardless of their particular area of expertise. It was also appealing to me because of the ability to offer sound professional learning that consisted not only of training but coaching over time as well.”

This group of leaders participated in the 3-day training, virtual quarterly facilitated group support including a guided book study, and had the option to participate in individual coaching as well as a 30-day intensive. This group also requested a final in-person full day including a second ELI debrief.

“This professional learning was well received by our providers,” Crystal reports. She provided data of her own, “On our internal evaluation tool, providers reported such things as having an increased ‘awareness of level of stress,’ the motivation to ‘practice de-escalating stress and responding with positive energy,’ ‘practice not passing judgment,’ and giving themselves ‘permission to take care of me’ and ‘not owning others problems’.”

“Providers have also embraced strategies. Overall, 81% of participating providers strongly agreed that (1) The training included opportunities to apply content and/or practice skills; (2) I left the training with tools or functional methods to transfer my learning practice; (3) I will use the content or implement the practice(s) from this training.”

Crystal notes her own observations, “Hearing the language of the INspired Leadership strategies is common when listening to providers. Many have taken advantage of the opportunity to receive coaching from INspired Leadership

coaches. I believe that the strong ratings, comments, and continued visibility of use of the strategies and language from INspired Leadership indicate the positive impact this professional learning opportunity has provided.”

Backed by Data

Organizations and individuals who want to know their return on investment for this professional and personal development can have it. Statistical data for a group in education is outlined below in order to clarify beyond theory what organizations are experiencing.

In the group of 23 mentioned earlier in the introduction of Tammy, pre and post ELI data showed statistically significant change. In this case, the ELI Assessment results revealed that a significant change occurred in the group’s ARL between the pre-ELI assessment (M = 3.27), and post-ELI assessment (M = 3.50), completed seven months later, $t(21) = 4.36$, $p < .001$. The absolute effect size, or magnitude of change, was large (Cohen’s $d = .77$).

What does that mean?

In plain English, it means that participants were more satisfied and engaged in their lives after a seven-month period. People are showing up more authentically in their personal and professional arenas and impacting the culture around them.

Why does that matter?

This matters because they are teaching, guiding and influencing the most precious treasure on the planet - our children!

Furthermore, as part of the assessment, the participants rated themselves on 14 Life Satisfaction Indicators. These included financial success, leadership abilities, work relationships, family relationships, intimate relationships, engagement of work, personal freedom, communication skills, productivity skills, time management, work/life balance, health/wellness, energy levels, and spiritual connection. The results showed that all 14 indicator ratings increased on the post-assessment, representing a significant change overall, $t(21) = 3.5$, $p < .01$. The most notable areas of improvement were communication skills, leadership abilities, time management and work relationships. As a group, the participants reported a five percent increase in overall life satisfaction ratings ($d = .50$) (Waldorf, 2017).

Statistically speaking, a five percent increase is substantial. Personally and professionally speaking, individuals with increased overall life satisfaction are influencing each other and our schools! This information is heartening in a system that includes parents and educators advocating for youth. Taking a personal and professional journey inward paves a way to empower others by setting an example that conscientious, caring leadership begins within.

Meet Jennifer, 5th Grade Teacher

Jennifer, an eleven year teaching veteran explains the cultural impact she has seen in her school, whose leadership team had training, monthly coach-facilitated support, and group book studies, and who personally also attended a 30-day mindset shift experience, including 16 practices and 4 coaching calls. She says, “An organization that invests in this training will not only increase its own efficacy, but will impact the individual lives of the members as well.”

Schools and organizations on-board with this type of professional development support teachers. Jennifer goes on to explain her personal experience: “There isn’t a part of my life that hasn’t been touched by INspired Leadership. Personally it has allowed me to accept whatever situation enters my day and to identify how and why I react in a certain way. I have greater awareness of myself, and when I move into a catabolic state, I use skills I have learned to move toward an anabolic state more quickly.”

She continues, “When interacting with others, I am able to be focused and purposeful and not allow judgments to interfere with relationship building. As a mom and teacher, the single most impactful thing I’ve learned involves being curious and suspending judgment.”

Students are with adults who use curiosity to know them as people, about how they learn and what inner state might be getting in the way. Students are with adults who are consciously leading themselves. True objective assessment becomes the norm. Relationships grow.

Jennifer explains this impact from her perspective, “This has allowed me to interact with others in an engaged and caring manner without allowing my preconceived notions to get in the way. In my eleven years as an educator, INspired Leadership has been the most valuable professional and personal learning I have encountered.”

My Two Cents

As a parent myself, I want interactions with my own children to be with highly aware adults. Too often pain develops during school-age years as children encounter social challenges (“Social Issues” 2017). If this pain is met by unconscious adults interacting with them in unconscious ways or modeling it with other adults, children can be adversely affected well into their adult years. In order to truly redesign school, the way people understand themselves and interact with others is essential to address because the former wholly impacts the latter.

What good is it to continue to improve teaching techniques and highly-certified methodologies if the way in which students are approached is undermining them? What adults convey to children (and each other) brings empowerment...or it does not.

Mystery and Measurable Outcomes

In a system that weighs heavily on the left-brain with order, objectives, and outcomes, INspired Leadership brings in some right-brain mystery, musing, and mesmerizing content. Marrying the two, left-brain and right-brain, contributes to a well-rounded individual and a well-rounded organization.

But how does one bring mystery into a system of data and measurable outcomes? First you take a stab at demystifying it, and then people begin to respond. They are moved and inspired because they recognize an underlying truth that words have not really been able to articulate before. Am I holding a significant role in an education system? Yes. Am I also part of a universal human experience, along with everyone else, within that role? Well, yes...

While articulating the experience of everyone impacted would be a delight, it is an experience one must really have for oneself. Whether part of a service center, a school, or a family, we are all just people, and this is a service for people.

People are walking away from INspired Leadership able to name their triggers, learn from them, and practice new habits that reconnect with their truest self – the authentic face without a mask – and this is good news.

Bottom Line

INspired Leadership helps restore unity within community, beginning with an inside out approach to personal and professional development. No matter what it looks like, inner resistance affects the outer environment. We can change everything external and try to control it, manage it, or manipulate it, but until inner states are addressed, real transformation will remain hidden behind masks leaders wear, and professional development will keep scratching the surface and not achieving the deep impact that is desired (or needed).

We get to decide whether our navigation through life is working for us or against us. Once that is recognized, the impact is clear that leading oneself directly impacts leading others. If we can serve the whole person, why wouldn’t we?

About the Author

Rachel Thalmann, M.Ed., Certified Professional Coach, INspired Leadership at ESSDACK

She can be reached by email at rachelthalmann@essdack.org. Visit INspired Leadership's website at www.inspiredleadershipwithin.com

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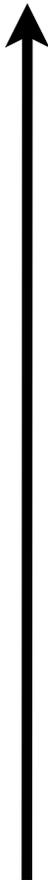
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INspired Leadership

INSPIRED LEADERSHIP FOR ENERGY AND ENGAGEMENT

**No Fear,
Doubt,
Judgment,
and Worry**



**A lot of
Fear, Doubt,
Judgment
and Worry**

Level of Energy	Associated Feeling, Thoughts and Actions	Characteristics of Leaders
Level 7 100% Anabolic	Creates, invents, has complete passion, unconditional love	At this level, we can use any of the below levels as we choose, create anything we desire, and do that as quickly as we believe possible.
Level 6 	Genius thinking, utilizes intuition, in the zone, joyful, connected	Sees all organization members as equal to each other and equal to self. "I listen deeply for what is not being said."
Level 5 <i>Strive for Five</i> 	Opportunistic thinking, focused, committed , enthusiastic, acceptance	Sees opportunities and has high expectations for all. Believes in others. "What is the opportunity?"
Level 4 	Service-oriented, compassionate, helpful, caring	Concerned with how their decisions impact both the organization and the people. "How might we support all involved?"
Level 3 	Responsible, compliant , copes well, rationalizes and tolerates behaviors and actions	Takes responsibility and complies. "Let's just take responsibility and move on."
Level 2 	Experiences inner/outer conflict, frustration, anger, justification, skepticism	Micromanages and blames others. Is often frustrated and controlling. "It's _____ fault we can't do this."
Level 1 100% Catabolic 	Victim thinking, worry, fear, self-doubt, apathy, avoidance, anxiety	Works in crisis mode and focuses on problems/barriers. "They are doing it to me again. I have no choice in the matter."

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Everyone is a leader either by choice or default. Leading is the way we help move people, including ourselves, to take purposeful action to achieve maximum results.



For more information contact
inspiredleadership@essdack.org

