

RESILIENCE IN THE SUPERINTENDENCY: PROFESSIONAL AND PERSONAL PERSPECTIVES AND SKILLS

Dr. Nancy Post, Ph.D.

South Jersey School Study Council
September 12, 2006

- I. Dr. Post began by noting that her interest is in how to help leaders stay healthy during organizational change. What is the difference between leaders who have slept well, have strong supportive relationships and those who don't?
 - A. Dissertation tracked 90 executives over three years and their work on change in their organizations and rate of change and their perception of their own health ...
 - B. I found a strong correlation between rate of change and perception of health – the faster the rate of change the faster the decline of health.
 - C. My job for you is to introduce methods, concepts, models during sessions that you can use between sessions and talk about how you apply them and with what results.
 - D. A quick story:
 1. When Dr. Post worked at Wharton with groups of senior vice presidents coaching them on 360E feedback evaluation and helping them work through it she found some who were ranked incredibly high by bosses, subordinates and peers
 - a. They were clearly stars in their work.
 - b. Asked them how much time they spent each week to achieve the excellence they were achieving. Their answers were 70-80 hours a week. They were fine with that, because of their commitment and the success they were achieving.
 - 1) Nancy found the same was true of their most valued colleagues and subordinates.
 - c. They would say their organizations were not in a state of emergency.
 - d. Nancy would ask, if you are working 70-80 hours a week in normal times, what will you do in time of emergency.
 - e. They realized that they had no room to spend the 109-20% more that would be required when a state of emergency hits – required change by the state, by the board, or some other emergency.

- 1) This is not just a question of being more efficient.
 - 2) Could also be a matter of redesigning their work and deciding what they could off-load to others.
 - 3) There are light-weight signs of depletion – back ache, headaches, overeating, etc.
 - f. When that happens, where will you get the energy from?
 - g. Because when the emergency happens, you will find the energy to do that. But at what costs?
 - h. Are there a set of assumptions that might be challenged that will enable yourself and others to be resilient and well and a resource for the organization.
- E. How we will structure our work:
1. Today... organizational energy
 2. December .. personal energy
 3. Subsequent sessions going in deeper on that with....
 4. Europeans talk about “renewable resource” models for staff.
 - a. These include job sharing, job redesign, attention to providing time as part of the work requirements for that.
 - b. In Japan they track a person’s career and predict where that person will need to acclimate into a new role and then design that into their jobs and job progress.
 - c. We can look at what we do in terms of sources of energy and sources of drain and develop ways of creating more sources of energy

II. Some intro commnets:

A. Some definitions:

1. Engery – the supply of it and how it is used.
 - a. Physics: kinetic energetic and potential energy.
 - b. Sometimes the use of the energy can repower the supply.
 - c. The energy of the system – the school district – is the energy that is used and stored and then used to move the system from its current state to the state you are trying to achieve.
 - 1) If you are trying to improve results from current staff, you are saying we need more outcome with no additional supply of energy. Thus, you need to increase what we have based on some form of a renewability model – to get more from what you have.
 - 2) Systems change is about how to find and mobilize this energy.
 - d. Planned system change – you use energy (kinetic energy) and find potential energy that can renew/restore/rebuilt as you go.
 - e. There are methods to restore/rebuild and renew energy for both the individual and the organization.
 - 1) Imagination can be one such resource.
2. What we find is that most industries work on a deficit model.
 - a. We spend more than we have (e.g., industries borrow money to start a business with bankruptcy as an out).
 - b. We have expenditure model of employees – use them as much as possible and don’t worry about their renewal, because they are replaceable.
 - 1) When we expend economic resources – run economic deficits

- 2) When we expend human resources – people burn out.
- c. We are beginning to see some backlash to this expenditure model. HR departments are trying to develop responses.
- d. Discussion:
 - 1) So much of what we are doing in schools is based on a business/industry model, with a focus on competition not on resource development and finding where you get and develop energy.
 - 2) We are asked to emulate the business model – in terms of hours put in, etc. Measuring effort, not outcome. Always tied to our electronics.
- e. Private industry is focusing on outcomes, not hours put in.
- f. Europe, on the other hand, has a renewable energy model – by 2008 have 30% renewable energy.
- g. We know we work more effectively and efficiently when rested.
- h. Tension:
 - 1) We live in a value system that focuses on doing more and more and more, and as efficiently as possible. With little emphasis on where to conserve energy or how to renew it..
 - 2) At the same time, schools are asked to conserve – to do more with fewer and fewer resources.
- i. Since the challenge may be organizational, there is probably an organizational solution or way to address the challenge.
 - 1) Thus, it can be important to look at the system dynamic that leads to burn out and deficit.
 - 2) Building the system dynamic with a focus on renewability models is part of the goal.
 - 3) Having the leader model renewability activities provides models for the organization in its own work.
 - a) Some of these activities – team building, quality circles, restructuring and culture change – are things we do in classrooms, but may not do them sufficiently with our staff, or staff work.
 - b) Leaders need to model these activities because staff will follow what you do, not what you say.

III. A theory about energy:

- A. We have only so much energy for our lives.
- B. The question is whether we want it to be short with extreme ups and downs, or longer with moderate swings.
- C. Story of three groups given an “important” but relatively low energy task, but are given more time than really necessary. Each group was asked to provide a team to do this still unspecified task.
 - 1. We tend to have “go to people” even if they are overloaded.
 - 2. We will fill the time for that task, and may not get the results you want.
 - 3. Relating to students – how is it that student athletes are generally more productive during the season than they are during other times of year.
 - 4. You get a lot of energy expended, but perhaps disproportional to the task to be accomplished, and disproportional to the results.

5. Need to focus on making sure we have the right people with the right skills to accomplish the job.
 6. We don't have a large staff to select from, so we have to find ways of using those people more effectively, as well as find ways of developing tasks that build on the strengths we have.
- D. Energy is stored in individuals as well as in their interactions.
1. As we move to organizations, we may be able to find more energy in the synergies of people than in individual behavior.
 2. We need to turn levels of the organization into "collecting" pools that provide energy for the parts of the organization as well as for the individuals within them.
- E. Discussion:
1. Question:
 - a. When we turn over responsibilities to others within the organization – to build organizational involvement and capacity – you give up some of your communication and responsiveness.
 - 1) The public may ask about X and you may not know because you delegated it to others.
 - 2) How to deal with expectation of stakeholders that you know all the details?
 - b. Response:
 - 1) Delegation without specification of communication and reporting loop is not much more than abdication.
 - 2) Communication parts of delegation need to be spelled-out explicitly.
 - 3) Need to orchestrate this double-loop, and then monitor it.
 - 4) Also, with this expectation that the superintendent know the details of everything that goes on in the district, can develop a group of people called "the grapevine" – those in the district who will have a sense of emerging issues that are likely to come up at board meetings.
 - a) This was a diverse group of people –beyond "key communicators" – who come from every aspect of the district and community.
 - b) Used an outside facilitator to guarantee confidentiality in these meetings.
 - i. Initial questions might be:
 - (a) What works and does not work in the organization?
 - (b) What is and is not censored about how the organization works? What can we talk about what do we not feel comfortable talking about?
 - ii. Other questions:
 - (a) What rumors are out there?
 - c) You can then anticipate questions at board meetings, as well as help you to craft messages for issues that are emerging.
 - d) Can help people learn how to listen and give good feedback.
 - e) Often naming the rumors

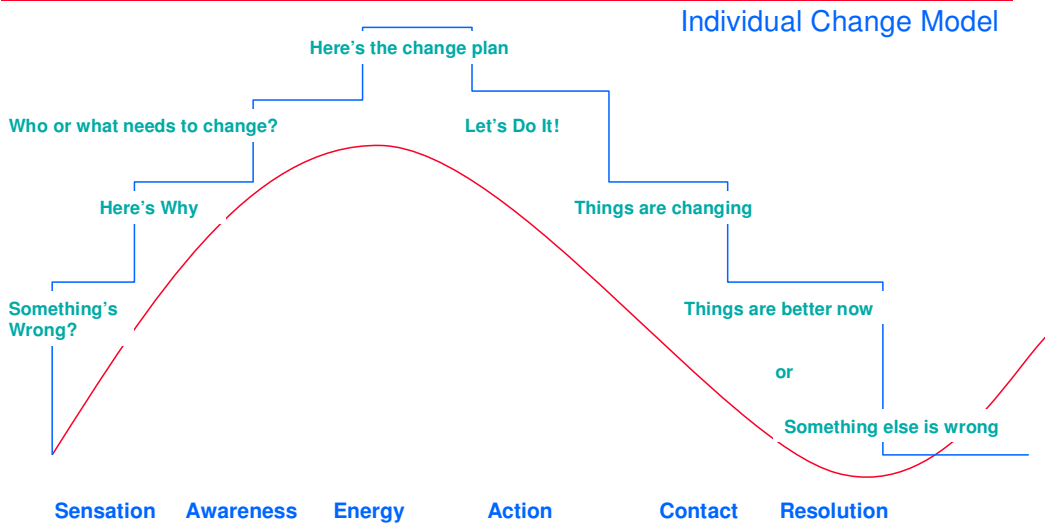
IV. Gestalt Model of Change:

- A. Why the model works:
 - 1. Builds energy for change
 - 2. Whole system involvement
 - 3. Democratic principles
 - 4. Self-management
 - 5. Meaningful involvement
 - 6. Learning, Discovery, Action
- B. It says that any kind of change you are trying to promote – reduce parental hostility in meetings, reduce negative impact of rumors – start by naming the change.
- C. Before you get to the point of implementing the change, you need to build enough energy among constituencies so that the change can happen.
- D. Need to focus on people's experiences during all of this.
- E. Don't start with the change you want, but start with the experience among people that something needs to change.
- F. This experience, or sensation, gets more urgent as people's awareness of the need strengthens.
 - 1. This can be a real sensation – churning in your stomach, etc.
 - 2. The awareness is a cognitive activity – making it really conscious.
- G. People then develop energy around creating change and change in specific directions.
 - 1. In designing the change, we need to incorporate people's objections to the proposed change(s) so their experience and needs are addressed in the change.
- H. This model can work at both the individual and the program level (see next page).
- I. While this is similar in many ways to the collaborative models of change that districts use, it adds a personal experience/energy aspect to it.
 - 1. In a school district, this seems to be more public and more variety of stakeholders than elsewhere.

V. Two tasks for next time::

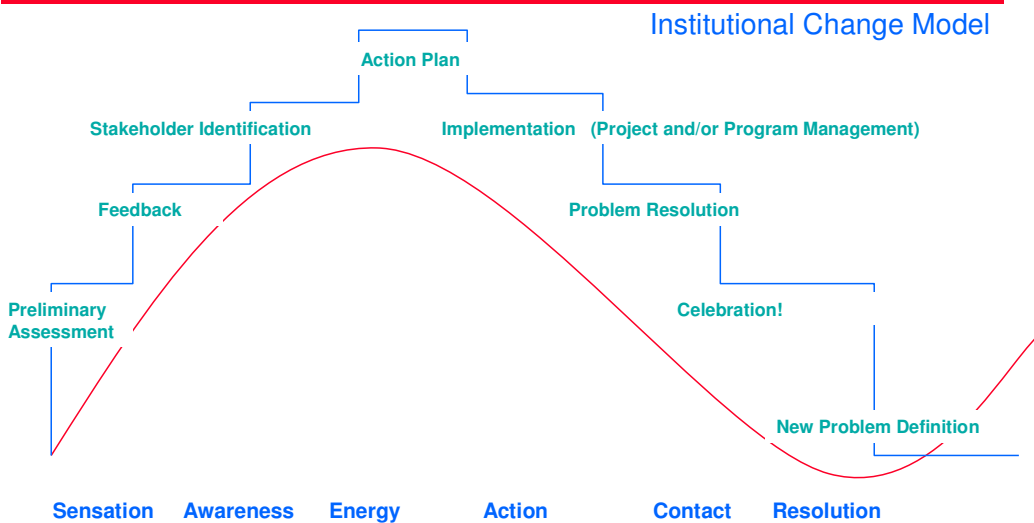
- A. Over next three days, do you notice any difference as you go back into your workplace? Did that “noticing” turn into a shift in your behavior – how you address things.
- B. Review your calendar for one week and color code items on that calendar. Code as follows and then bring this to the next session (that Harris will lead).
 - 1. **Green** for those activities that **generate** energy for you.
 - 2. **Red** for those activities that **deplete** energy from you.

Gestalt Cycle of Experience



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The Organizational Energy Crisis

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South Jersey School Study Council
December 12, 2006

- I. Introductions and what's consuming your energy:
 - A. Funding cycle is starting and then have two reviews (e.g. QSAC) coming in the next two weeks that require incredible amounts of documentation.
 - B. Time – evening concerts, evening meetings (Rotary, etc) teaching ... educational process is going smoothly.
 - C. Starting to review budget for each building and department. Also involved in reviewing strategic plan.
 - D. Time: board meeting, teaching at local university, holiday dinner for staff, holiday concert, but educational issue seem smooth and then budget will kick in consuming energy after winter break.
 - E. Construction project is consuming a great deal of energy – work orders, updates, etc.
 - F. We are gearing up for negotiations while closing out a construction project... closing it out seems like an endless task, seems to linger for years.
 - G. On top of budget and negotiation, business administrator is ill, and trying to manage with interim business administrator is challenging.
 - H. Just completed a new contract for teachers and budget season is starting. They are creating a “hard” cap which will pose additional challenges.
 - I. Team building – trying to build a team between community and a developer... school district has “developer” role – bringing utilities (sewage and water) to the school site in a new development. Township official who doesn't agree with the usefulness of our project. Community concern about this is also adding pressure.
 - J. Budget construction time of year.
 - K. Residency hearing sucking energy as well.
 - L. Positive focus coming out of negotiations – started early, moving slowly with tight budget. Veteran teachers are negotiating and argue for status quo, but district wants to build teacher leadership around instruction and probably around newer teachers (10 years experience). Building this leadership team is energizing.
 - M. School musical play issue – Board voted for the suggested play on a Tuesday evening, then reversed decision the following Thursday morning meeting. Community is split vocally on this.

- N. Focusing on the principal parts of my job and focusing parents on what happens on weekends and after school that then comes into the classroom the next school day. Getting parents to monitor their children's activities after school.
 - O. The "to do" list that gets created by people saying "we'll do that after the holidays".
 - P. Trying to get the budget to represent ideas/educational priorities, not just dollars.
 - Q. Issue of lawyer access to superintendent's personal notes each day. Legal response is not to keep daily notes. But as a personal style, journaling can be important way to reflect and remember.
 - 1. This internal dilemma about what does integrity require is really draining.
 - R. Security and safety –three "child lurings" with a single MO. In addition, on the day after one of the lurings, an individual with several warrants against him, decided to use the school as a safe haven. We got positive press and community response for how we handled it. But it put the community more on edge.
 - 1. The lurings were all after school – two middle school girls who were "approached" after the late bus... but it still bleeds into the school environment. And it affects/spills into the surrounding districts.
 - S. Staff attire committee – dress code for staff. I am a referee on this committee: older teachers vs. younger committee.
 - T. Teacher contract not up for another year, but we are having an outside agency review the contract.
- II. Discussion of personal energy in the organization as revealed by the above discussion.
- A. It is incredible what "generalist" leaders and manager role you have, which is imposed on your core skills in education.
 - B. The language you use to talk about your work is often mirrored in your body language.
 - 1. When saying "it wears you down" the person seemed to shrink in size.
 - 2. When talking about taking an ethical stand – the person sat up taller and broader.
 - 3. When discussing a difficult situation, the speaker's voice and breathing got tighter and shorter.
 - 4. When talking about how tight time is, speakers kept trying to fit more in.
 - C. It is worth noting in our physical states – breathing, posture, speech patterns -- when we talk about what's happening. This can provide insight into the impact of what we are talking about on us and our organizations looking at impact on physical experience.
 - D. When the system presents these different kinds of experiences, we must look for wedges for working through the issues that deplete us without internalizing them.
 - E. Part of the challenge is that the skill set you need to be superintendent is so broad in supervision of security, legal, etc.
 - 1. The skill set may be around your core competencies in education, but that is not what you spend most of the time or energy about.
 - 2. Instructional leadership is core, but all of this other stuff is happening, and takes so much time up.
 - F. The instructional leadership work is not where the extra stress or tension comes from.
 - G. Indeed, when you work in your area of core competency, the work may be challenging, but it is not where the stress is.

- 1. There is less uncertainty involved and you have a greater sense of what's possible and how to be creative in solving problems (in part because you have seen more of it...)
- H. At times it's not about our leadership skills or our EI, but about the skills and EI of those we are working with, which often makes difficult work even more difficult.
- I. What gives and drains energy, an example:

Gives energy	Drains energy
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Internal ethical debate can lead to more energy when you resolve to orchestrate support for original judgment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Decisions without consensus * Internal ethical debate can lead to loss of energy when board decides against your judgment

- J. During all of this, staff are watching you and making decisions about your leadership.
- K. There is a huge amount of research that suggests that those moments when you hold your breath, are the moments your brain is deciding what to do. If you are able to be conscious of that breath and breathe deeply, you actually create more energy for yourself and avoid the negative effects of tension.
- L. As you color-code your calendar, you can notice patterns –days of the weeks that are green or times of days that are all entirely red.
 - 1. You want to avoid long stretches of red followed by long stretches of green followed by long stretches of red.
 - 2. Research shows the body works in 2-hour cycles and if you don't spend time doing something energizing during each 2-hour slot, you will become more tired.
 - a. One lesson from this research: make sure you have some green activity every two hours!
- M. Color coding your calendar can help you find the patterns in energy use and depletion and to then identify low hanging fruit where an intervention can make a difference.
- N. Different kinds of exercise can make a difference for different kinds of people.

III. Looking at the energy of the districts:

- A. Within the system there are two kinds of energy (yin and yang).
- B. Western culture has “deficits” as a way of working.
 - 1. People are expected to have debt.
 - 2. People are also expected to work harder and spend more time working than they have to give. This creates a lack of balance in life.
- C. At issue is how to increase one's organizational longevity – to build resiliency and to store and use energy within the organization rather than expending it and having to renew it over vacation.
- D. Why this approach works:
 - 1. Builds energy for change
 - 2. Whole system involvement
 - 3. Democratic principles
 - 4. Self-management
 - 5. Meaningful involvement

- 6. Learning, Discovery, Action
- E. Leads to thinking about the gestalt cycle of experience.
 - 1. Focus on the example of school play being approved by the board, the superintendent sensing that something was wrong and did research to figure it out which led to ultimate change in the decision.
 - 2. This decision pattern mirrors the gestalt cycle of experience (see attached slides).
- F. Organizational processes parallel the individual process.
 - 1. E.g., budget process:
 - a. Start with preliminary assessment of budget needs
 - b. Get some initial ...
 - c. Stakeholder analysis is important...
 - 2. "Ready-fire-aim" routine. When there is conflict a lot is put on the leader's plate and requires more and more energy to get over the curve.
 - a. The leader becomes the fuel to drive the arc.
 - 1) Raises the question of where the leader gets the energy, gets refueled.
 - 2) This increases pressure on leader – which then interrupts sleep patterns, work patterns, etc. and work becomes more exhausting.
- G. Servant leadership can build energy in the system.
 - 1. Building coalitions and building support can be helpful.
 - 2. It's a way of operating that preserves oneself while building system energy.

IV. The anatomy of depletion (slides):

- A. At the individual level:
 - 1. First thing people feel when low level energy depletion is initial tiredness with some hormonal changes. Adrenal system is affected first... other parts are effected over time.
 - 2. Over time this leads to ongoing tiredness and lower immunity, appearance of chronic symptoms (symptoms of past injuries or illnesses begin to reemerge)
 - a. Over-the-counter medications or short vacation can help here.
 - 3. Over time, with more and more depletion, get an increase in medical problems – asthma gets worse, heart problems, etc.
- B. Anatomy of depletion on teams:
 - 1. Teams with good energy are well-functioning:
 - 2. When team gets tired:
 - a. Poor habits – lack of self-correction, lack of creative problem solving, etc.
 - b. Bad discipline.
 - c. Poor follow-through.
 - d. This leads to working harder and doing more to accomplish less.
 - 3. As this gets worse:
 - a. Individuals pull back from the team and engage in individual (not collective) effort.
 - b. Dissent becomes worse.
 - c. Poor productivity.
 - d. Chaos can emerge.

- C. At the system level:

1. A system with energy has people who are well-functioning and who are involved and focused on the future (as well as the moment).
 2. When the system gets tired:
 - a. Innovation goes – don't have time or energy to think out of the box.
 - b. We'll do it the way we have already done it because creation takes energy.
 - c. People become complacent.
 - d. Stasis
 - e. As get worse: organizational defenses override good sense.
 - 1) These organizational defenses can be seen in cumbersome processes – e.g. long and involved hiring processes that may not lead to good hires.
 - D. The need for change – the need to overcome exhausting work – is often felt most clearly by the leader. If the leader is tired, then it is probably because the system is depleted.
 - E. Discussion:
 1. The discussion linking leader tiredness/energy with organizational tiredness/energy is key.
 2. As a superintendent, I may feel low, tired, fatigued, but I also recognize the need not to let others see that, so I “regroup” and typically go out to a school and enter with lots of positive energy.
 3. One “dance” of a systems approach to leadership is when the leader shares some of the issues and challenges with others versus being the top-down leader.
- V. Thinking about organizational defenses:
- A. Organizational defenses: actions, beliefs and assumptions used to defend the organization from changes considered to be threatening.
 1. E.g., We develop work processes and believe that our success is built on those processes, rather than reflecting on them and whether or the extent to which they still apply.
 2. E.g. We get stuck in actions, beliefs and assumptions that may not be functional, and that have energy behind them, that can stop the change we want.
 - B. When good sense doesn't prevail and you are dealing with something larger (e.g., environmental problem, safety in the school yard after school), defenses emerge.
 - C. One of two circumstances happen:
 1. Something is moving and you don't want it to and you are holding it back
 2. Something you want to move is not and you need to start it.
- VI. One tactic is to start to reach out to people who you believe have influence around that issue. You can be more effective if you use one of three tools:
- A. Force field analysis:
 1. Before you start making the calls, start by making a map of the forces for and forces against what you want.
 - B. Stakeholder mapping
 1. Map who supports the change and who is against it.
 2. For each list of people and forces create a chart that plots skill and motivation:
 - a. E.g., who are the people who have high skill to support or block an initiative or change, but have low motivation to do so?
 3. This chart might look as follows:

	Low Motivation	High Motivation
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Low Skill		
High Skill		

4. Low skill and high motivation are like wild-cards – they want to block, but they don't know how to do it well so they are unpredictable.
 5. For those who support what you want:
 - a. Those high skill with high motivation can be useful as leaders.
 - b. Those low skill, high motivation are the ones you want to mentor.
 - c. Those high skill and low motivation, you want to find a way to increase their motivation and get them involved.
 - d. Those low skill and low motivation are more long term projects.
 6. Strategies for using the system analysis (stakeholder mapping and force field analysis):
 - a. For positive influencers – you want to get them more involved.
 - 1) Want to empower the high skill, high motivation people.
 - 2) Train/mentor the low skill, high motivation people so they can be effective.
 - a) Incentivize the high skill, low motivation to improve their motivation.
 - b. For negative influences:
 - 1) Include and keep high skill, high motivation negatives close to you. Rely on them for tasks that are important, so they feel the importance. Give them work to do that you can monitor, and that will involve them in seeing the difficulty and trade-offs involved.
 - 2) Closely monitor and manage the low skill, high motivation people (they are potentially the most dangerous)
 - 3) Watch for signs that the high skill low motivation people are getting activated – you want to find something they think important to work on.
- C. Grapevine feedback groups:
1. Used to inform leaders of dynamics that are censored, defended or not in the leaders' radar.
 2. Requires safety of the players.
 3. Best used when facilitated by an “outsider”.
 4. Used when you can get people together who will tell you the truth about what is going on.
 5. First session is setting ground rules for engagement and then finding out who is not in the room that needs to be there. Second meeting is with right people in the room. At the second meeting start to find out what people are thinking about most about the organization...just to get a pulse check. Can do that several times a year.
 - a. Can also use them to check out sense around specific topics: e.g., sense of safety of children.
 - b. Use them 3-4 weeks prior to announcing something or launching something so that you can find out where the landmines are likely to be, what the response is likely to be, etc.
 6. Can be used to move a project/change to the next stage of development.
 7. Can be used to surface “hidden” or stuck agendas that impede progress.
 8. Can help leaders identify issues or players that require attention.

VII. Application of stakeholder analysis:

- A. Focus on one or two items that are draining your energy – a change or something you are orchestrating – that you are putting a lot of energy and not giving the results you might want -- that involves a system dynamic that can benefit from more analysis.
- B. First step: identify the item/issue:
 - 1. Negotiations
 - 2. Curriculum supervision model
 - 3. Getting construction started
 - 4. Major curricular change coming
 - 5. Transition between business administrators
 - 6. Curriculum mapping
 - 7. Overhauling the teacher evaluation process
 - 8. Leadership issue in one school
 - 9. Develop of staff attire policy regulations
- C. Second step: Identify the desired end state.
- D. Third step:
 - 1. Identify the people that will support that desired end state.
 - 2. Identify the people who will detract from that desired end state.
- E. Fourth step: place each person on the appropriate grid.
 - 1. E.g., working to develop a curriculum supervision model and need to start to build more of a system of curriculum and get a curriculum coordinator for two areas.

Supporters		
	<i>Low Motivation</i>	<i>High Motivation</i>
<i>Low Skill</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • C. O Administrator • 2 principals • 6 board members 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 principals • 1 director • 1 board of ed member • 1 administrator
<i>High Skill</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Old time folks • 1 board member 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers • 1 board member • some community members – anti-budget folks

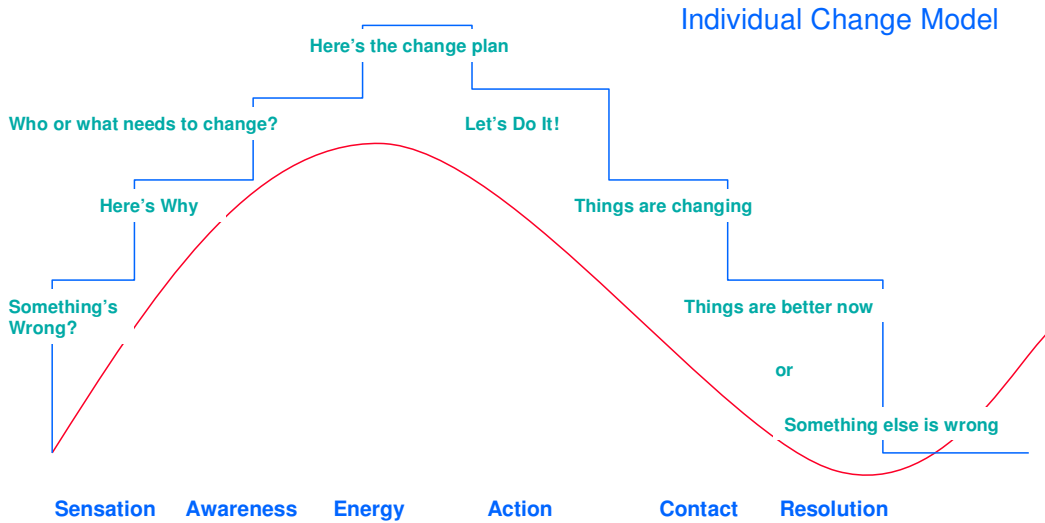
Detractors		
	<i>Low Motivation</i>	<i>High Motivation</i>
<i>Low Skill</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Superintendent (does not want to see idea not happen) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Board of ed member • 1 central office admin
<i>High Skill</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New folks in town • Older staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Different core of teachers • No votes in town – see it as an expense

2. Focus on the detractors to the change and ask where is the biggest drain to the whole gestalt cycle of change?
 - a. Those who are highly skilled and highly motivated would work hardest to make the change not happen or not work.
 - 1) Group brainstorm on how to work with those two different people, with different roles and different kinds of authority. How to influence? Who should exercise that influence? Goal is to get them into high, high positive.
 - a) Focus on the dynamics and politics
 - i. Get a highly skilled and highly motivated positive board member to work with counterpart on negative part.
 - ii. Do same for central office high, high negative.
 - b) Work with low skilled, high motivation positive teachers to move to the high high positive cell and that would put some pressure on the others.
 3. The six board members who are high skill but low motivation, don't care so long as it doesn't have impact. The key is the influence of teachers.
 4. Who are the motivators to get the supporting teachers to move up?
 - a. The two supporting principals are key as well as key teachers.
 5. You can then develop an action plan to focus your use of energy. Two action items:
 - a. Meet with the key principals to identify key teachers.
 - b. Delegate training, supervision, support to principals.
 - c. This contains the amount of energy the superintendent must expend and requires less energy than the normal talking to lots of folk model.
 6. *One key in the Gestalt model is to identify where to expend the least amount of energy to move the initiative up and over the hump.*
 7. The Gestalt model and the tool (stakeholder analysis) can be applied to any part of the system.
 - a. The key is to be clear on what the issue is and then be clear on the positive goal you are working to create.
 - b. You can do the stakeholder analysis and develop an action plan to develop specific strategies.
- F. Leave with two levels of applications.
1. Continue to do analysis of calendar.
 2. Apply these tools to issues in your work.
- G. Can use this as an evaluative tool to see what you could have done better.

VIII. NEXT TIME WITH NANCY:

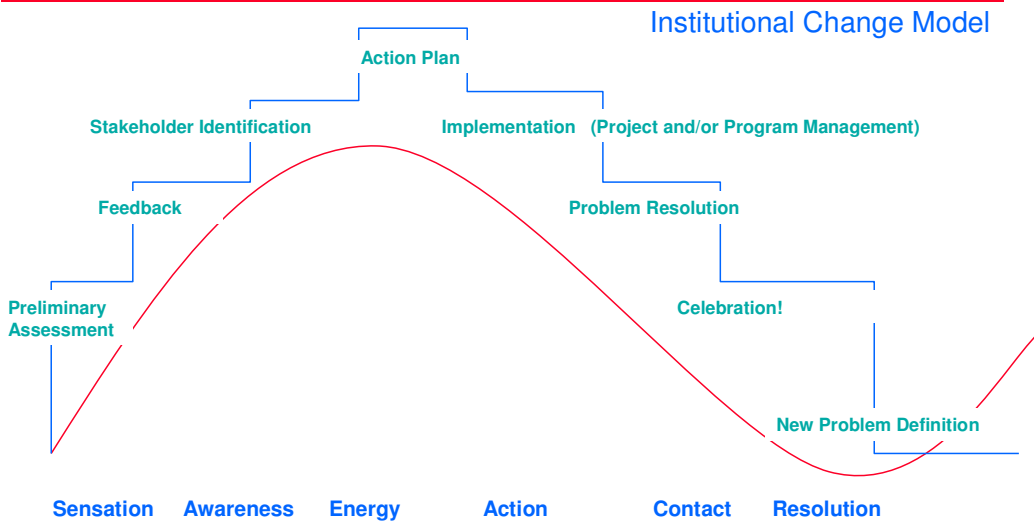
- A. Complex skills around an issue (e.g., budget).
- B. All take the same week to log on our calendars and then shared what we saw....
- C. Could then see how the complex skills relate to the calendar work.

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RESILIENCE IN THE SUPERINTENDENCY: Personal and Organizational Energy

Dr. Harris Sokoloff

January 9, 2007

In this meeting we explored some of the issues Dr. Nancy Post raised in December, focusing on building personal and organizational resilience to ensure your schools are places where students and staff can thrive. At that time, Dr. Post reviewed the gestalt cycle of experience and the related perspective on sources of organizational energy, and applied those perspectives to three tools – force field analysis, stakeholder analysis and grapevine feedback groups. Dr. Post noted that those tools can be useful in determining how best to apply personal and organizational energies to improve effectiveness.

Thus, on January 9th we focused on two areas:

- I. A more in-depth look at what gives energy and what depletes energy for participants.
- II. Revisited stakeholder analysis as a tool and applied it to a situation at work.

The notes which follow, review the work we did at that meeting.

- I. A more in-depth look at what gives energy and what depletes energy for participants.
 - A. The opening prompt: Think about the past month and name 1 thing you noticed about your energy level, one thing that either increased or decreased your energy level (either while you anticipated doing it or while doing it).
 - B. Here are people's responses, using "↑" to indicate "gives energy" and "↓" to indicate takes energy:
 - ↑↓ Vacation – time "off"
 - regroup – catch up on thinking and work
 - don't have to multi-task
 - closure – something gets done
 - catch up on personal things
 - time not to think about work
 - ↑ Kids going caroling at senior citizen center
 - their learning
 - uplifting
 - see that side after a rough week with student discipline problems

- ↑ Boxing day
- ↑ 2nd day back send donuts to schools
 - denotes a new beginning
 - celebration
 - hope
 - clean slate/new beginning – something special
- ↑ Literacy retreat couple of days back with principals, talk about literacy learning
 - talk about learning – what we went into the business to do
 - affirms beliefs
 - helps kids
- ↑ The children – learning walks, talk with kids
 - talk about plusses and what to do better
 - engage in why we became educators – see kids’ joy
- ↑ Planning for the future
 - community focus groups on what will look like
 - tension, but good tension
- ↑ Getting into classrooms
 - Meet with teachers and help them connect with each other.
- ↓ Filling positions for new board
 - conflict among board members
 - change makeup of board
 - also conflict because will not know what’s happening (and not being able to anticipate is draining)
- ↑ Meeting with prospective teachers
 - sense of possibility for new hires
 - makes future look bright
- ↓ Look at budget
 - know you will have to cut, or not grow
 - can’t do what will increase opportunities for students
 - ↑ can also energize you when you get it all together, see wins within the challenges
 - - but can’t keep what you’ve worked to build
 - ↑ can weed out what needs to be weeded out... force value judgments
 - how to maintain progress on special education goals
 - during:
 - - conflict to reach decisions can be exhausting,
 - ↑ but resolution can be positive

- May and June are difficult (staff cuts once budget is set) – we must find a way to make it work
- ↑ Got away as a family
 - 1st time ever took time off during school year (- bad feeling)
 - felt wonderful once we got away
 - know others are away, parents won't call
 - read books, played scrabble, etc.
 - ability to get up when I want, nap, etc.
 - no uniform
 - no demands
 - getting away from it all
- ↑ Student situation and discipline issue (discipline code said we should suspend, parents asked us to find another way due to student's ongoing other issues)
 - Supt. worked something out all were okay with it.
 - Father called to say thanks.
 - His recognition felt good.
 - That's my job.
- ↓ Sense of responsibility even when at a conference
- ↓ Letter from state (request info on drastic change of test scores -- improvement) that was reported negatively in the media
 - accusatory tone
 - timing of letter (date 12/6 but received on 12/19)
 - short time line for response
 - taking punches...
 - questions your integrity and your professionalism
 - pressure to give detailed report in explanation
 - ↑ when show *why* we did well, and can see all the great things we do, then it may give energy
 - - community suspicion/defensiveness
 - - takes our attention from doing what has led to success
- ↑ Vacation – stayed home, read, slept late, played golf ...
 - didn't think about work or problems at work (budget)
 - out of the routine
 - sleeping late
 - time to do other things I enjoy and I don't normally have time to do (and had forgotten I enjoyed so much)
- ↓ Dealing with mandates that are a waste of time
 - no one looks at it
 - no use for doing it

- ↓ Budget – scenarios on cap and possible cuts
 - > ↑ cooperation of team and creative problem solving
- ↑ Way system in district is working
 - satisfied we have put in place things that are working
 - my responsibility as chief school administrator is to make things work for all
 - feel positive and moving in the right direction
- ↑ Opportunities to help students and school (e.g., long term project with student having difficulties and gift from past graduate)
 - like teaching and working with kids, getting to know kids
 - being known for positive work with kids
- ↓ Politics of education
 - lack of trust, respect, “credit” (acknowledgement, validation) – and it’s fragile
 - success is attributed to parents/wealth while we get blamed for lack of adequate success
 - “interference with our work”
- ↓ The weight of being responsible, sometimes just want to be told what to do.
 - we take responsibility for *all* , when what we didn’t do
 - not often given (or accept) responsibility for what goes right
- ↑ Getting away
 - balance and perspective
 - time to reflect without pressure
- ↑ Reflecting on priorities
 - life events (becoming grand mother soon) and reflection on them and keeping balance
 - Balance things for kids and teachers
- ↑ Time with kids in classrooms
- ↓ Issues that need immediate attention
- ↑ Being a teacher
 - every day is a gift (kids opening mind and becoming more accepting of someone different, kid that says thanks, parents who thank you for what you do for their children)
 - honesty of kids
- ↑ Holiday
 - being with my young children
 - realization of way family changes as kids develop

- ↑ Took a November vacation – first time during school year
 - get away from daily stress even if I don't go anywhere
 - slows the game down, time with family

- ↓ Living where you work
 - always “on”, ‘in uniform”
 - can't be informal
 - constant impression management

- ↓ Headlines in paper and internalizing them
 - constantly defending your position

C. Lessons across energizing and across depleting:

1. Those things which are energizing have the following characteristics:
 - teachers, student and learning
 - that's why we do this work
 - social interaction – productive and positive
 - fulfillment – sense of self, centers us
 - life-long result on the other [and self]
 - influence on who others become
 - we are leaders for learning – satisfaction
 - be involved in productive relationship
 - focus on what the organization is about
 - looking through the lens of learning
 - not just goal attainment, but learning
 - make a difference in people's (students, parents, staff) lives as they work through issues and set on a path.
2. Those things which are depleting have the following characteristics:
 - lack of trust
 - conflict/politics
 - budget:
 - lack of trust
 - less control and interferes with learning
 - internal value conflicts and integrity
 - lack of resources to do what is essential
 - times when we are “lowers” or perhaps “middles” at best
 - less control, interference with learning
 - sense of failure
 - lack of personal time
 - managerial practices not connected to learning
 - those (tenure, budget, resistance to change) that constrain our creativity
 - particularly with implicit criticisms
 - inability to implement what we think necessary
 - Lose power to _____.

II. We revisited stakeholder analysis as a tool and applied it to a situation at work.

- A. Review of “stakeholder analysis” as a way to work through an issue, identifying different stakeholders and how you might work with them in more productive ways, as well as in ways which contribute, rather than deplete energy.
- B. The steps in “stakeholder analysis” are as follows:
1. Focus on one or two items that are draining your energy – a change or something you are orchestrating – that you are putting a lot of energy and not giving the results you might want -- that involves a system dynamic that can benefit from more analysis.
 2. First step: identify the item/issue.
 3. Second step: Identify the desired end state.
 4. Third step:
 - a. Identify the people that will support that desired end state.
Identify the people who will detract from that desired end state.
 5. Fourth step: place each person on the appropriate grid.

Supporters		
	<i>Low Motivation</i>	<i>High Motivation</i>
<i>High Skill</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • _____ • _____ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • _____ • _____
<i>Low Skill</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • _____ • _____ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • _____ • _____

Detractors		
	<i>Low Motivation</i>	<i>High Motivation</i>
<i>High Skill</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • _____ • _____ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • _____ • _____
<i>Low Skill</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • _____ • _____ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • _____ • _____

6. Focus on the detractors to the change and ask where is the biggest drain to the whole gestalt cycle of change?
 - a. Those who are highly skilled and highly motivated would work hardest to make the change not happen or not work.
 - i. Group brainstorm on how to work with those two different people, with different roles and different kinds of authority. How to influence? Who should exercise that influence? Goal is to get them into high, high positive.
 - Focus on the dynamics and politics.
7. You can then develop an action plan to focus your use of energy.
8. Such action items can contain the amount of energy the superintendent must expend and requires less energy than the normal talking to lots of folk model.
9. *One key in the Gestalt model is to identify where to expend the least amount of energy to move the initiative up and over the hump.*

10. The Gestalt model and the tool (stakeholder analysis) can be applied to any part of the system.
 11. The key is to be clear on what the issue is and then be clear on the positive goal you are working to create.
 12. You can do the stakeholder analysis and develop an action plan to develop specific strategies.
- C. We then divided into groups to work on applying this tool to different issues. Learning from these small groups included:
1. Context is important.
 2. The first step – identifying who is likely to support and who is likely to object/obstruct – is important in itself.
 3. It is often not realistic to put an entire group in a single matrix square. Specifying factions within stakeholder groups is important.
 4. It can be difficult to identify who will support and who will obstruct, and their skill and motivation levels. *HOWEVER*, doing it can be very valuable and a key stage in developing strategies.



SOUTH JERSEY STUDY COUNCIL

RESILIENCE AND ENERGY

Dr. Nancy Post

February 13, 2007

- I. Review of the year, a bit.
 - A. One goal is to identify and find sources of personal and organizational energy, and then how to gain access to them to improve organizational performance and student learning.
 1. Started with organizational sources.
 2. Today is more about what fuels *you* – and how you can pay better attention to your own sources of energy and how to use them to improve your performance in service to the organization and its goals.
 3. In leadership, we are trained *not* to talk or think about how *we* are.
 - a. Leaders are trained to think and talk about situations and events, not themselves.
 - b. Leaders are trained to perform and talk about circumstances, which makes it more difficult to talk about their physical experiences of leadership.
 - c. That effectively cuts off a powerful feedback loop about your leadership and performance.
 - i. It's like the frog in water.
 - Put a frog in boiling water and it will jump out immediately.
 - Put a frog in tepid water and increase it slowly, the frog will stay in the water and die from the heat.
 - ii. When you first plunge into a situation, you notice all of the signs and signals about the environment. When you get accustomed to a situation, you tend to lose track of those signs and signals.
 - B. Two types of energy: the kind you use and the kind you store.
 1. Vigor or power in *action*.
 2. The *capacity* for action.
 - C. Organizational energy crisis:
 1. The environment tends to take a little bit more energy than it puts in.
 2. In corporate cultures does this tendency to deplete promote health or disease?
 - D. What's real?
 1. We can see the number of colds people have in our organization as an issue about seasons.
 - a. But we can also ask whether people are getting sick because they are depleted, they are run down.
 - b. Indeed, being tired does deplete our resistance.

2. Corporate cultures shape beliefs and health.
 - a. When you walk into an organization you can read the organization by looking at behavior pattern.
 - i. Do people exercise as part of their day, or fit it in when they can?
 - ii. Do people eat at their desks or take time out to eat?
 - iii. Do people think it is okay to have down time, or always be working?
 - b. This is a mixture of past practice and of current leadership.
 - c. Discussion:
 - i. Corporate sector may be more focused on this than the education sector.
 - ii. Corporate sector supports exercise club membership, end-smoking programs, etc.
 - May be more a matter of working to contain health insurance costs than recognition of what's good for productivity.
 - iii. In schools, we have been slower to adapt to what the corporate culture seems to be providing.
 - iv. Why is this true of American culture rather than European culture which tends to be more balanced?
 - Public policy belief system in US is focused on belief that corporations that make profits will reinvest in the community.
 - This finds its way into a focus on quarterly profits and short term gains.
 - This is a value system that says use up as much as you can to develop as quickly as possible.
 - This all flies in the face of research (e.g., the “good to great” work out of Stanford) that argues that a focus on longer term gains and development is better for profits.
 - European policy belief system is more focused on policy that supports the individual – a belief that it is the responsibility of the community to support individuals.
 - d. There are some no-cost and low cost ways of doing this.
3. Health is a collective and systemic phenomenon.
4. Symptoms may be messengers of organizational stress.
 - a. So, for example, when a lot of people in an organization get colds, the flu, etc., that may be a sign that there is something about the environment that can help explain the illness.
 - i. Using the symptoms as a clue to look at what's going on in the organization.

II. Some case studies – work structures and unintended messages.

A. Major urban medical center.

1. 8-9 of the nurse directors in the center had gained 10-15 pounds within 1 year of joining the organization...
2. Implicit message: take care of patients, not yourself.

- B. Fortune 100 Technology Company:
 1. A company that had just been acquired by a larger company.
 2. Everyone in both companies wondered if they were going to have a job, which increased the load on the personnel managers.
 3. 16-18 of the personnel managers were separated, divorced or seeking marital counseling.
 4. They had spent so much of their time focusing on the customers, not their families.
 5. Yet, “related to your customers, not to your partner or spouse” was an implicit message that was being communicated.
- C. Federal government agency:
 1. When Clinton/Gore took over they started an extensive downsizing activity. FAA was one such agency.
 2. 6 of the 8 managers in the technical support area whose job it was to cut 8% of staff, developed back pain within 15 months of the start of the downsizing process.
 3. Implicit message: hold up the structure of your own organization at the expense of your own structure (spinal/back structure).

III. Organizational health.

- A. Organizations shape health.
 1. Health is a continuum of states of physical, emotional and spiritual well-being.
 - a. When the work is driven by values.
 2. Creating a culture which values employee health is critical to organizational sustainability.
 3. Corporate culture has powerful impact on behavior.
 4. This impact extends to employee’s family and friends.
 5. Unconscious and unmeasured impact.
- B. Health and worker Lifecycle:
 1. Attention to health is a critical factor in sustaining an aging workforce.
 2. Healthy workplaces are attractive to increasingly selective Generation X.
 - a. Discussion:
 - i. Seem to view themselves as better trained and having something of value to offer and want to participate in organizational structure and planning.
 - ii. Looking for a good match.
 - This can emerge as a lack of loyalty.
 - iii. Can also be seen as a lack of work ethic.
 - Wages are better and they are not looking to take on additional responsibilities (e.g., coaching, etc.).
 - iv. Literature says that from our generation to Generation X:
 - Shift from looking for a culture to fit into *to* to where they look for something that can fit into what they have to offer.
 - This can be very positive, if they see that the organization has what they have to offer.
 - But can also be seen as self-centeredness.
 - See “system owes me” attitude among 40-50 year olds.

- Perhaps because social contract about employment has changed and people see large corporations going into bankruptcy to avoid paying pensions.
 - This can create a “take care of me and mine” attitude.
- v. Part of the issue is how the organization understands what Generation Xers bring in.
 - vi. Charles Handy *The Knowledge Worker* is a good discussion of the attitudes of the knowledge worker culture that is developing in the U.S.
 - vii. Generation X, the knowledge worker, is also more attracted to healthy work places – value added to them – which also has productivity benefits to the organization.
- C. Health is not a typical corporate focus:
1. Generally, little attention is given to health, unless it is in the “germ dynamic” when lots of people have colds, etc.
 2. Where attention is given, only physical issues are “valid.”
 - a. Thus, if people need “down time” it is better to get sick physically and get a sick day than to raise issues of organizational issues.
 3. Push to somaticize physically.
 - a. Somaticize: when a tension that is experienced psychologically evolves into physical symptoms.
 4. So, watch for job stressors – are they energizing or depleting?
 - a. Job conditions
 - b. Role stress
 - c. Interpersonal factors
 - d. Home-work interface
 - e. Career development
 - f. Organizational norms/politics
- D. Health – Body/Mind/Spirit continuum
1. Loss of meaning needs to be a variable.
 2. Valid response to major organizational change.
 3. Heed for meaning in Generation Xers.
- E. Physical health measurements:
1. We are trained not to do the following:
 - a. Frequency of bodily symptoms – e.g., colds, cravings for sweets, sleep, neck pains, back pains, etc.
 - i. What are they and when do they emerge?
 - b. Severity of bodily symptoms
 - i. How severe are they at different times.
 - ii. Question: is there a decrease in symptoms as people become more aware of it?
 - People who did the best were those who noticed the stress and found conscious physical responses to stress.
 - As we get older, we need more aerobic exercise (building strength) and less anaerobic (building circulation). Both are necessary, but the balance changes as we age.
 -

- c. (Re) occurrence of pre-existing conditions.
 - i. Stress tends to exacerbate pre-existing conditions.
 - ii. What we eat, do etc. when under stress (e.g., what we eat) affects our ability to deal with stress.
- d. Testing levels (cholesterol, blood pressure, etc.).
- e. Acute/chronic.
- 2. Tracking energy measures health:
 - a. Depletion and replenishment of energy affects body, mind and spirit.
 - b. Health of body, mind and spirit can be tracked through individual, group or system.

IV. The five stages of organizational development:

- A. Five types of energy:
 - 1. starting
 - 2. growing
 - 3. maturing – calls on circulation
 - 4. make it routine and stable – digestive phase
 - 5. ending – find what's valuable and eliminate what's not
- B. Each stage has physiology behind them.
- C. Principles of energy management:
 - 1. Slide 21
- D. Functions in org life: (Side 22)
 - 1. Start up phase.
 - 2. What are human and economic?
 - 3. In school systems and health systems, work is more in:
 - a. Growth phase
 - i. Planning and development
 - ii. Making and Authorizing decisions
 - b. Productivity phase
 - i. Producing and stabilizing
 - ii. Managing and supporting
 - c. Education requires these because it requires stability.
 - 4. Different industries are heavier in other places.

E. Each function is associated with a body part:

Stages of Organizational Development	Functions in organizational life	Functions and “officials” (relation to bodily organs)
Start up phase	III. Managing Human & Economic Resources IV. Mission & Purpose	Bladder Kidney
Growth phase	VII. Making & Authorizing Decisions VIII. Planning & Design	Gall Bladder Liver
Maturation phase	I. Coordination & Control II. Marketing & Priority Setting V. Internal Communication & Contract Negotiations VI. Networking & Climate Setting	Heart Small Intestine Heart Protector (Pericardium) Triple Heater (3 Endocrine functions)
Productivity phase	XI. Producing & Stabilizing XII. Managing & Supporting	Stomach Spleen
Evaluation/ending phase	IX. Inspiring & Clarifying Values X. Evaluating & Controlling Quality	Lung Large intestine

1. Stomach and spleen are digestive organs.
2. The ability to plan and develop is like the work of the liver which organizes and cleans the blood.
3. Likewise the gall bladder takes fat and deals with it, is what’s affected when we make and authorize decisions.
4. Triple heater: heat regulation—mixture of three endocrine functions that regulate heat.

F. The five elements – Chinese names for the different kinds of energy

1. Water
2. Wood
3. Fire
4. Earth
5. Metal

G. Look at the arrows in the slides:

1. They connect and have direction.
2. But they also indicate where to look for change if one gets too powerful or large. That is, the organizational will self-correct or die.
 - a. If an organization that is too focused on making decisions and on planning and design (and not enough on implementation), the work of evaluating and controlling quality and of inspiring and clarifying values will be important in getting the company back on track.

H. Common emotional manifestations by phase Slide 26)

1. If in the start-up phase that you are having trouble moving into growth phase, you see excessive fear, suspicion and paranoia.
2. If in the growth phase and having trouble moving in to (3), you will see leadership that is manic (e.g., Enron with out of control expansion and sense of power).
3. In stage 4, you get too much sympathy which can turn into a lack of support for self, or lack of concern for people...

I. Each emotional manifestation of the lack of balance leads to physical side effects:

Stages of Organizational Development	Functions in organizational life	Emotional Manifestations by Phase	Somatic Expressions By Phase
Start up phase	III. Managing Human & Economic Resources IV. Mission & Purpose	Excessive fear Paranoia Bravado Lack of fear Suspicion Passivity	Back Pain Dizziness Frequent Urination Dryness Loss of Hearing Crave Salt
Growth phase	VII. Making & Authorizing Decisions VIII. Planning & Design	Excessive anger Fury Rage/aggression Suppressed anger Depression	One sided Headaches Eye Strain Inflexibility PMS with Anger Crave Sour
Maturation phase	I. Coordination & Control II. Marketing & Priority Setting V. Internal Communication & Contract Negotiations VI. Networking & Climate Setting	Excessive Joy Separatism Inappropriate Humor Sadism Mania Lack of Joy Sadness Excessive Expressiveness	Palpitations Poor Circulation Crave Bitter Tendency to be Hot/Cold Insomnia Loss of Sexual Energy
Productivity phase	XI. Producing & Stabilizing XII. Managing & Supporting	Excessive Sympathy Lack of Concern for People Scapegoating Masochism	Weight Gain/Loss Stomach Ulcer Mouth Sores Muscle Weakness Indigestion Crave Sweet
Evaluation/ending phase	IX. Inspiring & Clarifying Values X. Evaluating & Controlling Quality	Excessive Grief Sorrow Mournfulness Lack of Grief Isolationism	Colitis Hay Fever Asthma Eczema Crave Spicy

J. Leadership examples:

1. Earth to metal phase (e.g., how to shrink and provide more value – e.g., auto industry).
 - a. Example from hospital/health care system.
 - b. Research on miscarriage (as well as severity of symptoms of menopause), there is an immediate endocrine response to stress which can cause miscarriage or higher frequency of miscarriage.
 - c. Solution: ran focus groups, let women talk about their concerns re: staff cuts, identified emotional needs and addressed them. Results were positive, increased fertility rates (back to normal), high retention rates of people across time, and more production.
2. Leadership attention to creating a culture that supports a healthy work environment...
3. Safeway:
 - a. One region of Safeway had 130 workers with highest absenteeism and accident costs of any region.
 - b. Manager studied possible causes --- equipment usage, training, scheduling.
 - c. Research led him to understand that the single major variable *was his own mood* – his anger and yelling at people had people afraid of him.
 - d. Actions:
 - i. Manager surveyed employees for stress and suggestions.
 - ii. Authorized 5,000 square foot fitness facility.
 - iii. Authorized programs “Buns on the Run,” “Healthy Eating”
 - e. Results:
 - i. Absenteeism dropped from 8% to 0.2%.
 - ii. Accidents slipped from 1,740 to 2 work days lost in a year.
 - iii. Turnover plummeted from a high in some jobs of 100% to less than 10%.
 - iv. Grievances dropped from 75-80 per year, to one.
 - v. Estimated return of \$15 for each dollar invested in the programs.
4. Merck: Balance Family and Work
 - a. Researchers from Work and Family Life study group of Bank St. College of Education studied Merck employees.
 - b. 41% of workers stressed by work/family balance.
 - i. This is a *huge* percentage of workers to be stressed. If 4 in 10 come to work feeling high level of stress it has to reduce effectiveness.
 - c. Merck actions:
 - i. Workshops added on parenting, to help parents with their parenting stress issues.
 - ii. Senior executives limited work hours (in the facility).
 - Demonstrated value of family life and restored balance.
 - Senior executives were encouraged (and encouraged to allow their staff) to attend children’s afternoon sporting events.
 - Decided there would be no meetings before 9:00 a.m. so parents could be home with kids before school.
 - iii. Spouse referral center developed.
 - iv. Work-at-home policy was created (including what kind of work could be done from home) to allow people to live at home and enforced it.

- v. Start of job-sharing.
 - d. Of course there are trade-offs that have to be negotiated and worked through.
- K. Center for work life policy in NY did study of 15,000 executive women.
 - 1. Women in leadership are working more, divorced more, remaining single more compared to men.
 - 2. Stresses on women in senior positions are dramatic.
 - 3. Starting to recommend hiring policies and practices that are more specific to women.
 - 4. When you see women in leadership positions who are still in relationships, they tend to have spouses/partners who are supportive of them and their work.
- L. Fleet Financials
 - 1. Fast growing financial services company had difficulty retaining highly skilled employees.
 - 2. Hired Radcliff public policy center to conduct double blind study determining factors
 - 3. Fleet Results:
 - a. Workers cite need for more flexible employment
 - b. Management authorizes job sharing, flextime, compressed work-week
 - c. Employees reported decrease in insomnia from 79% to 50% after changes were instituted.
 - 4. How Good Changes Began:
 - a. Leadership *listened* to stress
 - b. Leadership took a message about him/herself
 - c. Leader created response to the organization
- M. Concept of “pooled resources” – benefits that people can share.
- N. There are studies of who does and does not get sick or have physical symptoms when stress increases:
 - 1. Something about what they do they can control.
 - 2. Astute and good at communication.
 - 3. Build good supports for themselves out of work.
 - 4. Such “hardy people” tend to rise to the top.
 - a. This means “hardy people” are managing people who are “non-hardy”.



RESILIENCE IN THE SUPERINTENDENCY: PERSONAL AND ORGANIZATIONAL ENERGY

Dr. Nancy Post, Ph.D.

South Jersey School Study Council
May 8, 2007

- I. Introductory Question: How mature is your organization (school district)? Responses:
 - A. District 1: Adolescence.
 - 1. There are sparks of maturity and hope but then there is regression to childishness.
 - 2. Like a teenager, who has concerns that aren't important to anyone else.
 - 3. Lots of hope still ahead and a lot of current pain.
 - B. District 2: Expectation of performance.
 - 1. It is now tied to accountability.
 - 2. Previously, there was individualism, now they see performance as important, for self and that they will be monitored and accountable for that performance.
 - 3. There also spikes of regression away from performance... "I've made the decision and I don't need to answer to anyone, and I want to be taken care of."
 - 4. There are expectations that communication will be constant and that resources are available, to accompany the accountability.
 - C. District 3: Age of organization – we have 70% turnover in last few years, so we have a young staff.
 - 1. Enthusiasm, energy and desire to do well; it is contagious.
 - 2. At the other end of spectrum are folks close to and ready for retirement who are stepping back from expectations and accountability of the times. A feeling of "been there, done, that, and this too will pass."
 - 3. Mature and high functioning leadership team, some key people have left (retired, other jobs) and these transitions have had a few challenges.
 - 4. We have a group of young professionals ready to run and admin. team is capable, but have some holes.
 - 5. Having to acculturate a new administrative team, puts us back a bit – less mature and more adolescent that we were a year ago.
 - D. District 4: In the middle.
 - 1. Rebellious – which is both good and terrible.

2. They are trying to figure out what their limits are and are stretching those limits, with flashes of brilliance, but also dark spots, points of discouragement with the challenges – almost like middle school.
 3. I think in terms of age groups (baby boomers, generation X, and millenials). These are millenials; they are willing to do what needs to be done – try new things and stretch. Don't feel boundaries.
 4. Very socially conscious, but can get discouraged when all of their effort does not bring change with kids in challenging contexts.
 5. We have to remember that our district is only six years old.
- E. District 5: Middle aged
1. Some are in crisis, while others have settled in, satisfied with the status quo, not pushing selves.
 2. There are some who are trying to push the envelope and do new things.
 3. Administrative team has been going through some power struggles between individuals this year; we did some team building to work through.
 4. Working on new 5 year strategic plan that we hope will provide new direction for some people and direct some of the power struggles.
 5. [Is middle age the time of greatest accountability? When you have to answer “the questions” and consider the meaning of what you do, your legacy?]
 6. When new, you are allowed/expected to make mistakes and when older, you are “allowed to be foolish,” but when you are in the middle, you should be at your best and be accountable.
 7. Does middle age crush creativity or do we need systems at middle age to encourage creativity? Leadership is about harnessing that energy.
- F. District 6: Compare our district to a professional athlete in their prime.
1. Paid fairly well, good batting average (must be 2-4 or 3-4), there is the expectation that we should hit home runs.
 2. At same time, has ups and downs, injuries, pressures and accountability from fans and management.
 3. Such athletes are never satisfied, always pushing to improve.
 4. There is always an injury and a periodic slump and the challenge is to reach excellence within those limits.
 5. This is like our district – and there is always pressure there from different stakeholders.
 6. We need high expectations, but also to be realistic. There are some populations [of educators] that you can't change.
 7. Leadership is about where to focus energies to make the most difference.
 8. We have a number of veterans (half or more veterans who have been here) all of whom are solid and looking to improve.
- G. District 7: Maturing – but not sure from what point or how long it will last.
1. Board expectations of how to be professionals are clearer.
 2. Not adolescence, perhaps early 30s.
 - a. We have some young principals.
 - b. Board is stabilizing and is sending a message about consistency which is important if we can expect transformation across levels.

3. Regarding the administrative team, my job as superintendent is to build capacity for leadership within that team.
 - a. Have hired six new people over three years, and have hired for quality of character, and hired well.
 - b. Have become more stable than we were when I came in.
 - c. Organizations go through cycles and are now on an upswing. One challenge is how do we use that and strengthen it so that the plateau is constant, not a regression.
 4. Part of it is about timing, and the cycles of change and need.
 5. With all that is always swirling out there (testing, policy changes) you need to focus. Before I came, there had been years of chaos. That was one of the reasons I took the job; I knew it would have to swing up because it couldn't get worse.
- H. District 8: I am in my 8th year, and came with a new team.
1. As a new group, we accomplished a lot, didn't have to fight the "this is how we've always done it."
 2. Have had stability at central office, with turnover in principals.
 - a. New principals are acclimating into the core administrative team.
 - b. Because overall leadership team has been consistent and focused and share values, goals and direction we are in a new place, and have moved through initial stages of change.
 - c. Question is how much further I can lead this organization; whether this team can move us to the next level.
 - d. A new board may have the expectation of success, and might not understand how difficult it is to move to a new level, don't understand the challenges of getting to where we are now.
- I. District 9: A mixed bag –leadership includes some people continually willing to challenge status quo, push the envelope and rethink what we are doing.
1. Pushes against some on the team who seem to want to move instruction forward, but seem mired in the day-to-day of the district.
 2. Need to be able to question "this is how we've done it" at every turn.
 3. My challenge to push people to think differently.
 4. But instructional level of staff is very mature, pushing teachers to be excellent.
 5. Leader's job is to ask questions to encourage them to think about the rationale behind the actions.
- J. Summary of responses:
1. It is interesting that many of you describe maturity as a positive thing, vs a challenge to be overcome.
 2. What can be an asset for one system in its developmental stage might be a liability for another system.
 3. *Good to Great* argues it is not the people who fit into the routines that matter, but what matters are the values that people bring to the organization.
- II. Nancy Post: A tale of two organizations:
- A. The first organization: A top notch, state of the art, nationally known health care system searching for a strategic plan to drive them forward.

1. Interviews with top leaders led to conclusion that, although the health system was very mature at 75 years, the core staff was more adolescent in its behaviors – even among top doctors – that would not play well in a strategic planning and development planning process.
 2. Forward movement would require working with conflict.
- B. The second organization: General Motors, pre-Saturn.
1. Interviews with leaders, each of whom was surrounded by hierarchy; you had to go through 3-4 layers to reach the players.
 2. These execs talked about it as “general mother” rather than “general motors.”
 3. Question here: how do you change an organization with hierarchies, well-ingrained routines, rules, etc. and break it up into parts to be able to move forward -- how to decide what to keep and what to eliminate.
- C. If leading a strategic plan with two different kinds of systems, such as these examples, one would not use the same processes.
1. In the first, one would need to manage conflict.
 2. In the second, one must look at bureaucracies and think of what to keep and let go.
- III. Life cycles of organizational life – “organizations grow up, too”
- A. The idea of “organizational life cycles” refers to the multiple stages of organizational development.
1. Multiple models have been proposed in the literature; Nancy likes model that incorporates five stages: forming, storming, norming, and performing, plus evaluating and ending.
 2. Nancy Post’s model of organizational life cycles follows a similar pattern, with five stages:
 - a. Embryonic phase
 - b. Baby phase - differentiation
 - c. Childhood – tests skills and limits
 - d. Adulthood – mature, routine functioning
 - e. End of life – legacy
 3. In turn, these five stages of organizational life have an element which is primary:
 - a. Embryonic/start up phase -> Water, or primary, element
 - b. Baby phase -> Wood, or growth, element
 - c. Childhood -> Fire, or interactive, element
 - d. Adulthood -> Earth, or stability, element
 - e. End of life -> Metal, or ending, element
- B. *Embryonic*, the early phase:
1. System “just starts” – in business sector: 80% of new companies don’t make it much past birth.
 2. Americans love start-ups and are more forgiving of those who start a new business with other people’s money (followed by bankruptcy) than other countries.
 3. This perpetuates the resource drain or debt cycle.
 4. Discussion:
 - a. How do you justify that the application of business ideas and issues are applicable to school systems? As we hear about preparing children for participation in the global economy, where do we see our school systems?

- b. One participant is concerned about losing the American entrepreneurial spirit as we prepare kids for a market we can not predict. Do we need to change character?
 - c. Or do we need to harness creativity, spirit of entrepreneurship and apply it to a changing environment?
- 5. Because of this, the bulk of businesses are in these early/embryonic stages, but more than 80% of American's work in organizations that are in their childhood.
- 6. Business trends are more for merger and acquisition rather than in start-ups.
- 7. How do we harness the creativity and entrepreneurship that is in start-ups for the improvement of existing organizations?
- 8. The embryonic stage does not proliferate in school districts – we don't have all those start-ups and can't have the kinds of failures we have in businesses.
- C. The *baby phase* is focused on development and differentiation.
 - 1. This is about developing a sense of self – of the boundaries that define self.
 - a. Example: Differentiation between Bill Gates and Steve Jobs.
 - 2. Part of determining relation of self and other, and that we can't operate completely in isolation.
 - 3. At the same time, we can do the basics of what's there.
 - 4. As we differentiate, we add new functions, which need more and more definition.
 - 5. This is a period of great development (staff development included). If an organization gets through this phase, it understands what it is about, and also how it needs to play with others.
- D. *Childhood* phase: test the skills and limits (like 3-7 graders)
 - 1. This phase is like adolescence. The organization's people can handle independence, they work better in teams, and are high performing while still needing guidance.
 - 2. Good minds and skills, and don't need constant management, while wanting to test their skills on challenges.
- E. *Adulthood*:
 - 1. Mature, where there is routine functioning.
 - 2. There is strength, solidity, and the system (not just individuals or teams) is mature.
- F. *End of life*:
 - 1. It is important to recognize that systems do end.
 - 2. Legacy – what are the values about which we want to be known?
 - a. This “end of life” phase can exist even as the organization continues, though in a different phase/image.
- G. These five stages are not linear but are cyclical.
 - 1. E.g., when an organizational cycle ends, the next phase will be like a start up, even if some of the folks remain.
 - 2. In the corporate world, there can be an attempt to purge the old –with an emphasis on the low performers.
 - 3. The team dynamic changes with the new people (as it needs to incorporate new people).
- H. The cycles can be increasing in a time of rapid social and cultural change, but in some organizations it can be incredibly slow (e.g., GM) and exacerbated by unionization.
- I. Discussion:

1. It is the nature of the superintendent's role that one does not necessarily build new teams, but inherits an administrative team.
 2. In educational environment, I was lucky to come on with a new team. If I had come into team with all tenured administrators, it would have been very different.
 3. It is never distinct in business, either. The question becomes, what can we do with staff people in order to make change?
- J. The playing field in education is different than in the business world. In education, the outside forces – federal and state regulations and board – are more complex than in the business world.
1. The addition of charter schools may make the competition in public schools more like that of business.
 2. Education (and health care) are the most regulated domains, and are operating with diminishing resource allocation.
 - a. But business has constraints about the need for quarterly results that is more demanding than the accountability demands on schools.
 - b. At the same time, the resource demands on education are greater.
 3. If resource base you started with is greater than the resource base you have at the maturation phase, you need to rethink how you use resources.

IV. Five phases have impacts at multiple levels:

- A. Example of a teacher who has been teaching in same classroom for 30 years:
 1. At individual level, can get a teacher stuck at a phase that needs to end.
 2. Leads to a departmental challenge (we can't change unless that person changes).
 3. Leads to organization looking to see how we can deal with this, as a signal for what is possible in the organization
- B. Link five phases parallel to the five elements, and each requires different leadership, different energy and different work.
- C. Phase-by-phase discussion:
 1. Start up – water phase:
 - a. Critical task: survival
 - b. Operating style: informal – in part because we may lack resources and have to jury-rig skills, etc.
 - c. Leadership: navigational/directive
 - d. Emotion: fear and its counterpoint of the enthusiasm of start-up
 - e. Key functions: clarify mission; finding sufficient resources.
 - 1) These functions are essential to move to the next phase: growth.
 - 2) Without clear mission or funding, you revert to the fear of survival and will stay in start-up phase.
 - 3) If there are deficiencies in resources, the organization can always regress to this phase.
 2. Growth – wood phase:
 - a. Critical task: establish identity – who am I compared to you (“terrible twos”).
 - b. Operating style: defined and structured to contain the differentiation work
 - c. Leadership style: strategic, clear
 - 1) Leadership challenge is to clarify the plan and make decisions that keep moving in that direction and then managing the conflict.

- 2) Key for growth companies is to manage internal competition
- d. Emotion: anger
- e. Key functions: planning, decision making.
- 3. Interactive – Fire phase
 - a. Critical tasks: citizenship (team work) and communication
 - b. Operating style: interactive, spontaneous
 - 1) Only routinize few things, not program or teaching – need interaction among staff for continuous growth process
 - 2) Enough professionalism so that people want to do it well and share it with others.
 - 3) We struggle with not routinizing teaching. Can routinize some things, but not others.
 - c. Leadership style: charismatic/relational
 - 1) At this phase, the organization can be held back by leaders who want innovation and only want to routinize certain things (if at all).
 - d. Emotion: joy
 - e. Key functions: internal and external communications
 - 1) Includes interactions across parts of the organization.
- 4. Stability – earth phase:
 - a. Critical tasks: routinize system.
 - 1) This is essential to allow a high performing organization to mature and keep that high performance going.
 - 2) Challenge is to provide a stable base for creativity without stifling it.
 - b. Operating style: slower, rhythmic
 - c. Leadership style: managerial
 - d. Emotion: empathy
 - e. Key functions: productivity, integration
- 5. Ending – metal phase:
 - a. Critical task: evaluation – mark what (and who) does and doesn't work
 - 1) Efficient, effective evaluation presses for accountability.
 - b. Operating style: quality conscious
 - c. Leadership style: inspirational
 - d. Emotion: grief
 - e. Key Functions: evaluate, inspire, eliminate
- 6. Discussion:
 - a. American companies –e.g., GM – are heavily in the stability phase and developed Saturn to be its embryonic exploration.
 - 1) But GM created Saturn to be so separate from the larger company and so they didn't learn the lessons Saturn had to teach.
 - 2) In part because they didn't want to challenge unions, while leaders weren't looking forward.
 - 3) Key can be to bring top people from the new into the old and let them foment for the change to the new style.
 - b. People are imprisoned by their successes – either profits or student achievement.

- c. As I look at these leadership styles, I am not as good at some as at others. When do I either decide to leave, or try to change?
 - 7. Leaders do tend to be good at 2 or 3 of these skills, but not others.
 - a. So the question is not whether we leave, but how do we back-fill the staff or board or teacher leaders to bring the other skills.
 - 1) How do we bring in others to round out the skills we don't have?
 - b. Superintendent Paul Vallas is a good example of someone who continues to focus on the skills he has, and go to places that use them the most – mostly at the ending to embryonic to early development stages. He likes to be a “turnaround artist.”
 - c. We can morph back and forth, and need skills from all of the phases to keep moving.
- D. Preferences:
 - 1. Leaders prefer leading organizations in phases that are comfortable for them.
 - a. How do you then meet the need for the system when you are required to engage in leadership styles that are not your strengths?
 - b. Note also that different staff feel comfortable with different kinds of leaders.
- E. Which of the five phases do you feel you are good at?
 - 1. Evaluation – planning – development triangle is where the superintendents said they felt strongest.
 - a. May need support at productivity – as the general, we have captains to deal with the productivity.
 - b. The middle managers – principals – are the key here – they are the stabilizers and keep things going.
 - c. Teachers, supervisors are also key for productivity and stability.
 - d. We can make sure it doesn't get stuck and heavy:
 - 1) Interactive and evaluation phases are key to keep the productivity flexible.
 - 2) Monitoring is important to make sure that productivity is happening and is based on most current research.
 - 3) Monitoring consistent implementation of programs is essential across the district.
 - a) We use other forms of our organization – curriculum and instruction coaches, etc. – for monitoring.
 - 2. The Twelve officials: functions in organizational life
 - a. Each phase is characterized by different functional skills, all of which are important, but gain in importance at different stages.
 - 1) Embryonic phase – key officials are:
 - a) Mission and purpose
 - b) Managing human and economic resources
 - 2) Baby phase – key officials are:
 - a) Making and authorizing decisions
 - b) Planning and design
 - 3) Childhood phase – key officials are:
 - a) Marketing and priority setting
 - b) Coordination and control
 - c) Networking and climate-setting

- d) Internal communications and contract negotiations
 - 4) Adulthood phase – key officials are:
 - a) Producing and stabilizing
 - b) Managing and supporting
 - 5) End of life phase – key officials are:
 - a) Inspiring and clarifying values
 - b) Evaluating and controlling quality
 - 6) Every system needs people who can do these functions, but leader can't do them all.
 - 7) Leader does need to be aware of own strengths and using them as appropriate.
- b. Budget creation and establishing and maintaining resources live in the start-up phase.
 - 1) A good business administrator is a key here.
 - 2) Managing human and economic resources is one of the “key officials” that is essential in phase 1.
 - 3) Budget time is when we make our “thumb print” and how the organization will move into the future.
 - a) It is stressful because we have to make the difficult decision, often based on economic concerns, not only what is best for learning.
 - b) This is *not* why we got into the business, but we must attend here if we are to enable the district to move educationally.
 - c) The evaluation – planning – development phase is what gives us energy, so we focus there.
- 3. Given that this is where we are now, is this where we should be?
 - a. We do all these, and have all in thinking when we lead (particularly in a small system). Have some skill in each area.
 - b. We can find people in our organization who are good at each of the essential functions, by looking a people at the organizational, departmental or individual level we can tap into those skills that we need.
 - c. Doing a team assessment where you analyze who in your organization will do each of the twelve functions – and then figuring out where you lack staff and developing an explicit strategy to meet those needs – through professional development and job responsibilities.
- F. System needs of teams:
 - 1. If an organization is in a new phase, teams will need new skills.
 - 2. We must also consider what is the incentive for individuals and teams to change.
- G. Clinical impact on leaders:
 - 1. If a team/system needs more energy from leaders, it will draw it from the leader (and may feel drained).
 - 2. If the leader is deficient in an energy source (or kind of energy), symptoms may arise.
 - 3. Long term overuse of an energy source (or kind of energy) can signal need to change style, job or support systems.

- H. There are emotions that typically arise with movement from stage to stage.

- V. How to stay resilient:
 - A. Track system's developmental phase.
 - B. Note new needs.
 - C. Plan for needs to be met.
 - 1. This includes finding where people's strengths are and encouraging them to use those strengths, as well as to help them find others who can support their weaknesses.
 - D. Reduce or eliminate what's not needed.
 - E. Use symptoms – emotional, psycho-dynamic, physical – as a signal for change.

- VI. How to deepen and apply the work- activities followed by discussion with peers:
 - A. Dissect calendars
 - B. Team assessment questionnaire
 - C. Perhaps – use these five stages as an analytic tool in future conversations.
 - D. Use peers for coaching.