The principal called to confirm that I would be speaking at the school’s commencement ceremony next week. I assured her that I planned to be there and was looking forward to the occasion. It is an honor to be asked to give a commencement address.

In the conversation that followed we talked about leadership. And that brought to mind the connection between effective teaching and effective leadership. Both depend upon the following principles.

Create a Safe Environment

People learn more and perform better when they work in a safe environment. Such an environment opens thinking, encourages risks, and promotes creativity.

In contrast, hostile environments cause people to become cautious.

That costs you time and money because cautious people always produce less. Sometimes they even retaliate with counterproductive behavior.

Your primary responsibility as a leader is to create an environment that facilitates excellence. It is the foundation of success for you, your staff, and your organization.

Such an environment, while realistic, allows people to be themselves. Such an environment, while honest, rewards people for doing their best. Such an environment, while candid, encourages people to contribute their ideas.

How do you create a safe environment? The quick answer is by the way you communicate, interact, and relate to your staff. Deeper answers include the reward systems, communication patterns, and accepted behavior in your organization.

Take a moment to evaluate if you have created an environment that advances or hinders your goals. Does it free people or hold them back? How would you perform if you were working in this environment (instead of leading it)?

Involve the Participants

Adults learn more when they have an active role in their education, and they produce more when they have a genuine stake in their future.

Surveys support this by showing that education with a live instructor produces significantly higher levels of learning, information transfer, and impact than any mechanical system (such as e-learning). People also want to practice what they learn instead of just hear about it, as they would in a lecture.

That same concept applies to leadership. People prefer to participate in making the business work, rather than just being told what to do. Thus, effective leaders assign tasks that challenge creativity, teach new skills, and

Take a moment to check if the work that you assign maximizes the return on your payroll investment. Does it make people partners in your success by maximizing their participation? Does it inspire people with the possibility of increasing their value to your organization? Does it advance their careers?

Treat Everyone With Respect

People learn when they trust the instructor. And they follow when they trust the leader.

Trust, you must know, is earned by treating others with courtesy and respect.

On the other hand, hostile, rough treatment always breeds fear and suspicion. It causes people to wonder when the next punishment will fall.

Certainly, the people reading this journal treat others with respect. And you must know that we show respect through the ways that we communicate, interact, and respond to others.

The challenge then, is to find ways to improve in this area, because your improvements will produce greater levels of trust in return.

And that leads to becoming a more effective leader.

Take a moment to assess the level of respect in your organization.

Do you model the high levels that you need? And do the members of your staff show respect for
In some ways, a leader is also a teacher. Both of them focus on helping others become more successful. And they do this because their success depends upon the success achieved by others.

Five points I made in an article titled "A template for success, Qualities of effective leaders", apply to the focus of this issue. They are:

**Leaders Teach Others.** They set high expectations that cause change and growth in others. They help others improve, even to the extent of creating performance that is superior to their own.

This article was previously published by Steve Kaye on his website included with his bio. He has kindly provided permission to reprint them in Teaching and Learning.

Steve Kaye PhD helps people hold meetings that get results. His workshops have informed and inspired people nationwide since 1992. And as a meeting facilitator he gets results that others couldn't obtain on their own. He is the author of two books on effective meetings and a certified professional facilitator. He has also published over 190 articles on leadership skills, produced five collections of poems, and appeared on radio and TV.

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**Leaders Think Forward.** They look into the future. The farther they see, the greater their impact. They inspire others to work for their vision by telling others how it produces success for them. As they approach their vision, and learn more about how it fits into the present, they move the vision further out into the future.

**Leaders Move Forward.** They make decisions quickly based on the information available at the time. They equate procrastination to stagnation. They take risks, knowing that risks produce mistakes. Then they learn from their mistakes and make corrections.

**Leaders Model Goodness.** They exercise the highest forms of personal maturity. They know themselves and they take appropriate measures to manage their actions and behavior. They seek out and promote the good in everything. They tell the truth, even when it requires courage to do so. They are honest, truthful, and fair.

**Leaders Serve Others.** They do what is best for the organization and the people in it. They place other's success above their own.

**Geese and Leadership**

Author Unknown

Next fall when you see Canada Geese heading south for the winter, flying along in a V formation you might consider what science has discovered as to why they fly that way.

As each bird flaps its wings, it creates an uplift for the bird immediately following.

By flying in V formation the whole flock adds at least 71% greater flying range than if each bird flew on its own.

People who share common direction and a sense of community can get where they are going more quickly and easily because they are travelling on the thrust of each other.

When a goose falls out of formation it suddenly feels the drag and resistance of trying to go it alone and quickly gets back into formation to take advantage of the lifting power of the bird in front.

If we have as much sense as a goose we will stay in formation with those who are headed in the same way as we are.

When the head goose gets tired it rotates back in the wing formation and another goose flies point

It is sensible to take turns doing demanding jobs with people or with geese flying south.

Geese honk from behind to encourage those up front to keep up their speed

What do we say when we honk from behind?

Finally it is important to know that when a goose gets sick or is wounded by gunshots and falls out of formation two other geese fall out with that goose and follow it down to lend help and protection. They stay with the goose until it is able to fly again or until it dies and only then do they launch out on their own or with another formation to catch up with their group.

If we have the sense of a Goose we will stand by each other like that.