

## SELMAS Conference – What kind of coaching do Educational Leaders need

### Opening

I'm a leadership coach. I work with senior leaders across many sectors, Directors, Chief Execs, Senior Teams. In Education I work with HTs of Nurseries, Primaries, Secondaries; with QIOs/ EOs right through to HoS and Directors of Education.

I'd like to share 3 observations of what I think are your Leadership challenges. 1- you're overly involved in detail; 2- High Performance Mindset is not prevalent; 3 – There are inconsistencies thrown up by your Self Directed model of learning. So let's explore each.

### **1.All the heads I have worked with, independent of sector, are embroiled in detail.**

At best detail is a headache, at worst it's overwhelming. You expect yourselves to know so much of what goes on, and you get involved in driving many initiatives. I see common reasons including

- Knowledge is King
- Habit - of you and staff
- Tricky bit. There is a satisfaction in knowing, doing, fixing. You have completed something and because of that things move forward. It's comfortable. Going outside of that and doing ambiguous stuff like strategy, visioning, considering how to pace change across the school – all of that can be less satisfying because it's longer term and there are no clear boxes to tick. **I think you are staying with your comfort zone.**

Consequences?

- you are tired
- you don't get time for the strategic stuff,
- people push things to you because you will make decisions for them thus **derisking their role and diminish their accountability,**

### **2.The degree of Ed Leaders having a High Performane Minset is variable and can be low.**

I'm talking about one element of attainment/achievement – the Leadership mindset around excellence. Unleashing all the potential of innovation whilst maintaining absolute rigour and accountability over standards, I mean inspiring all of the kids, staff, parents to excellence, I mean sustaining energy. I have seen instances of real High Performance, and I know there are many more than what I have seen. But it's inconsistent. My purpose is to raise the question with you, what is the mindset required for High Performance ? And if *this* is clear to you, which it may be for many of you, what is stopping you from actively developing that mindset?

### **3.That brings me to the bottom line of my observations. Your Leadership Development is based on a self-directed model. I know that this is a fundamental tenet of Education, and is underpinned by Stds for Headship. My observation is that your own Leadership development is inconsistent , sometimes non-existent and often undirected – helpful but not necessarily stretching towards excellence**

I wanted to check out whether I was being naive in this perception. So I asked all the Heads that I've coached to tell me their L Development activities for themselves and their SMT in last 2-3 years. The most common response was development has been focussed on selected activities of HT **role** – disciplinary procedures, HSE, CFE.

I'll compare into the private sector. My old MBA school offers 21 Leadership Courses – of which 17 – 17 – are non functionally bases. High Performance Boards/Building on Talent/Advanced Strategic

Management/Mobilizing People/High Performance Leadership. There are 82 institutions such as this in the UK alone – if you do the sums, you get an idea of the **demand** for executive education. In my old private sector world as a senior leader, it was expected, it was necessary to do it, and you wanted to do it – learning is great.

It's not availability that an issue – SCSSA and similar organisations are out there. I would offer these thoughts.

- Some heads don't engage in it because they don't have time
- Some heads don't engage in it because they think they've done their time
- Some heads don't know what to be thinking of, what to actually ask for

I have worked with Heads who have been in extremely successful situations then found themselves in new schools where the context was so difficult that making change seems impossible, and they feel like failures. The consequences include the Head's hot buttons – those things that trigger emotional reactions – going off, making the whole situation very difficult for everyone. If they had done some work on Self-Management and Being Inspirational, plus some basics on Leading Change, this may have been mitigated.

I've worked with Heads who are really well rounded, good, doing pretty well. Not necessarily High Performance but pretty good. But don't know what else they could do, and well, there's only another 5 years to go. If they were stretched before this point - Inspiring Communication, Engaging Stakeholders, Building on Talent, they'd have been able to go to another level of performance.

### **Slide**

Coaching Can Help. First of all coaching, both 1-1 and team, is wholly within the local context – you drive the agenda. So it's very real. Leadership Coaching is about raising the game to not be And I think you should hold me and my colleagues to account for helping with the following

### **Review**

So Ladies & Gentlemen. I am confused.

**How is it that Leaders of Learning, who can produce and implement such foremost thinking as CFE, are not driving the best out of your own Leadership Learning?**

## **NHS LEADERSHIP QUALITIES : DESCRIPTORS**

### **Personal Qualities**

#### Personal Governance :

- commitment to service excellence
- integrity and probity
- account for performance
- engage with others in decision-making
- develop team and self

#### Personal Management:

- self-awareness
- emotional competence and consistency
- articulate and live by values (.being-the-talk.)

#### Knowledge Management:

- asking the hard questions proactively
- listening empathetically to understand
- maintaining a contemporary knowledge of best practice

### **Service Excellence**

#### Ensuring Focus:

- directing attention to the key issues
- regulating the temperature (managing pace and stress)

#### Delivering Governance:

- looking after the needs of patients, staff and the public
- balancing risks

#### Achieving Results:

- creating a climate of performance delivery and accountability
- resolving complex problems through a win:win approach

### **Future Focus**

#### Identifying goals:

- creating purpose with a focus on outcomes
- shaping and articulating the future with passion

#### Creating and making choices:

- thinking flexibly and innovatively
- making choices in uncertainty and ambiguity
- taking risks with political astuteness

#### Developing capability

- building relationships and partnerships which recognise and capacity with partners: interdependency and which share learning
- instilling a staff, team and organisational development culture

#### Leading Change:

- aligning people, structures, systems and processes to secure goals
- seizing technological solutions to improve healthcare
- inspiring others and unleashing energy to change