



YOU'VE GOT THIS!

Boosting Staff Morale As A Leader

Steve
FRANCIS



Working in schools is tough

- Staff shortages
- Reduced budgets
- Student and staff well-being
- Increased anxiety
- Changes in society
- Unrealistic expectations
- Parents outsourcing and blaming
- Schools expected to do more
- Student behaviour
- Short attention spans
- New technology
- Changing curriculum
- Increased accountability



When morale and well-being are low,
staff fall into 'survival' mode





**Happy staff are more likely to be engaged,
to take responsibility and contribute
above and beyond.**

*Engaged employees
stay for what they **give***

*they like their work,
are able to contribute and get a
reasonable level of job satisfaction*

*Disengaged employees
stay for what they **get***

*a secure job,
a desirable salary and
good work conditions*



It's NOT the Leader's job to FIX staff well-being





Well-being solutions are different for EACH individual

*Staff need to take responsibility
for their OWN well-being
and make informed choices*

What should TEACHERS do?



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Work - Life Satisfaction
Balance





EMAIL MADNESS

Keeping it under control



We need to consider how and why we are using e-mail. Whilst it can be an effective communication method if used well, used poorly, it wastes a lot of time.

Think before you write, not when you write
Remember that a face-to-face conversation is the most effective. Use email to set up a call or online meeting and use it to discuss in minutes often takes hours in a series of emails.

Don't confuse Important and Urgent
When sending an email that requires action by a sender, use "Response required by dd mmm".

Reply Vs. Reply ALL
Don't use Reply ALL unless there is a valid reason to do so. It should be directed to all recipients.

Subject Lines
A good subject line will assist recipients in deciding what to do. Requirements for 2025

Summarise / Be Brief
Try to write self-contained emails. When using attachments, avoid the need for the recipient to open them. Peculiarly, the very long ones.

Format
Use line spacing between paragraphs to make reading easier. Bold font sparingly as it can make text difficult to read.

Thank you
It is not necessary to respond with just "thank you" after a second interruption.

No Personal Attacks
Avoid personality discussion. Speculation or accusations based on processes or beliefs isn't helpful. You can explain your own perspective, but others is off-limits.

Check Addresses
Before hitting send, check the addresses. Whilst you can draw attention to it. Pause after you have finished to double check that you have explained your point clearly and without misinterpretation. When in doubt, save the message as "light of dawn".

Group Emails
For external group e-mails, use the BCC field to ensure privacy.

In conclusion, email is a very useful form of communication. Use it carefully when using e-mail as it may be that you are not being used as a conversational tool, as this can be frustrating.

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Effective PARENT TEACHER MEETINGS



Parent-teacher meetings can be a stressful time as they only do they usually occur before or after a busy day of dealing with parents.

Preparation and planning are essential to increase effectiveness.

The need for social distancing make setting up the meeting challenging. You should have a clear space to meet alongside the parent so that you can discuss and the opposite can create an adversarial environment (not conducting interviews virtually eg using Zoom or Teams).

Try to use inclusive language by emphasising the collaborative nature of the meeting. **"We are working together to help the student."**

It is important to ensure the space is private and the clearly signed waiting area should be provided for a folder of their child's work samples or a list of questions.

The intention of Parent-Teacher meetings should be about the student.

The aim should be for both parties to have a better understanding of the student. It is therefore important to get the balance right between the parents. Ask if they have any information that you should be aware of. From the parent's perspective, they are often progressing. They only get a very limited amount of time to discuss it well to **demonstrate our knowledge of the student.**

Preparation is vital. **Identify key points and issues** to discuss. Prepare key messages.

Always begin the meeting with something positive (the **'sandwich approach'** helpful). Start with a positive comment and close with a positive statement. Parents want to hear good news - even if there are challenges.

It is essential that the meetings are honest and clear. **'coating'** things too much to avoid confrontation or conflict.

Talk straight - Parents need to be given accurate information. Messages carefully so that we are not seen as criticising. Ensures that at the conclusion of the meeting the parent had intended.

It is important to **adhere to the designated appointment**. Be needed, book a double block of time. If the allocated issues to be discussed, make another appointment.

Avoid meetings becoming a **'point scoring'** event. That is wrong. They are about **building a partnership to co-operate** with parents of this particular student could assist them.

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www.HappySchool.com.au/freetrial

Surviving REPORT WRITING



Report writing time is stressful - fact!

It is an additional task to do as well as your usual day-to-day responsibilities in teaching classes. It also comes at the end of the term when we are at our reserves are often running low. However, the stress is to be expected - do it at this time every year! It is helpful to monitor your self-talk, use your time wisely and reaction in proportion.

Don't stop exercising because you are busy.

It is particularly important to **maintain the activities that reduce stress** in your vulnerable. Often the first thing that we stop doing when we add the extra time, is our exercise routine. Taking a break to get some fresh air, raise the dog to other places is vital and makes us more effective. The 30 minutes it takes to NOT wasted time. Don't stop walking the dog, going to the gym, walking, running and activities are vital to BOTH your physical and mental well-being!

Deal with the current challenge.

Break down the tasks involved in writing your reports into achievable chunks. Achieved each day, to be able to meet the deadline? Tackle the difficult part first. It is important to focus on the task at hand and remove distractions. Find working for a block of 50 minutes of focused time before taking a 10-minute break. Set a realistic goal to achieve in that one-hour session.

Talking straight means successfully communicating an idea.

Parents should be given accurate information on their child. However, our phrase comments. Reports on some students are particularly challenging these days. Getting the balance right in your wording is important. A **'Talk straight'**. If we 'soften' our wording too much, for fear that we might offend the student, we risk not getting our message across - particularly when there is too much 'sugar coating' to soften our message.

However, if we are too blunt in our message we can damage the relationship and not caring. This will just add to our stress later as parents or students hitting the **'sweet spot'** in the middle, not too soft and not too blunt, is important. **re-read the reports that we are particularly concerned about**, after a good night's sleep.

The aim of communication is to **clearly convey a message from one person to another**. How do we achieve that? Are you talking straight?

If you are going to miss a deadline, talk to your Principal, confront reality, responsibility. Avoid blaming others and making excuses. Make a commitment that is realistic and assure them that you won't make the same mistake again.

Learn from your mistakes and make a plan for next time.

Obviously the preventative strategies of being organised and prepared are important. If you aren't happy with your current level of preparation, learn from your mistakes and record what you need to do in the future, **to prevent this happening again**. Write your plan down in your diary to remind yourself for next time.

Take action now to be better prepared next time.

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Dealing With DIFFICULT PARENTS



Dealing with difficult or demanding parents can certainly add to the stress of working in schools. Whilst staff in schools have to consider the needs of multiple students, most parents are only advocating for a small number of students, their own children. Whilst that's understandable, it doesn't make managing their concerns any easier.

KEEP THE SCALE OF THE PROBLEM IN PERSPECTIVE. The 80/20 rule generally applies. 80% of the problems, issues or concerns will generally come from 20% of the parents. In many situations, an even larger percentage of issues will come from an even smaller percentage of parents.

This is not intended in any way to trivialise the issues. Whilst dealing with difficult parents may take a lot of time and energy, helping to resolve issues and keep the parents on side (where possible) is beneficial.

A further complexity is that most parents are responding to information that is second hand. They are generally responding to what they are 'told' happened. Seeking clarity about the facts therefore needs to be a priority before concerns can be truly resolved.

A relationship of trust between the school and the home is important and benefits the student. In the great book *'The Speed of Trust'*, Stephen M.R. Covey outlines behaviours that build trust. Whilst the behaviours aren't 'rocket science', using the relevant behaviours in dealing with 'difficult' parents can not only assist in resolving issues but also build the trust that can lead to issues being less likely to occur again.

LISTENING FIRST is always a good idea! - At times when we are faced with a confrontational parent we immediately get defensive and start to counter attack. This is particularly the case when the parent raising the issue clearly hasn't got all of the relevant information. Before correcting or jumping to a defensive mode it is usually best to really listen to ALL that they have to say so that we clearly understand their concern or perspective. Often they will have rehearsed what they have to say and they are not ready to change mode from speaking to listening, until they have regurgitated whatever they have planned to say.

CREATE TRANSPARENCY by correcting misinformation or providing further information that the parent wasn't aware of. This should be done in a calm manner. Be aware of your own tone and body language. Aim for calm, measured and in control rather than defensive.

Covey highlights the importance of the 'sweet spot' with each of the behaviours. The fine balance between too little and too much of each behaviour is clearly evident in the next behaviour, **TALKING STRAIGHT**. It is important that we are honest and upfront with the parent. We need to get the balance right by avoiding being too soft - eg sugar coating or political spinning, or too blunt eg harsh, abrupt or aggressive. The key is conveying our message calmly and clearly so they have accurate first-hand information.

If we are at fault, the best thing that we can do is **CONFRONT REALITY** and **RIGHT WRONGS**. Blaming others and making excuses are unlikely to build trust. Confronting the situation, admitting where we have made a mistake and endeavouring to genuinely address it are far more likely to be helpful.

CLARIFYING EXPECTATIONS is the next step. Both parties need to be clear on what happens next. Keeping these commitments is vital to building trust.

Whilst it is impossible to resolve ALL difficulties, applying Covey's behaviours that build trust is usually helpful.

Ultimately we can only control our OWN behaviour. We can't control the behaviour of others.

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Early Career Teachers

Happy Teacher
Real Start
Starting well is important for the entire school year. It is crucial to get you started on the right foot.

Happy Teacher
The Keep it Simple
As a beginning teacher, your environment is established. Maintain order but also create a positive atmosphere to get you started on this journey.

Happy Teacher
Congratulations On Becoming A Teacher
First and foremost, congratulations on becoming a teacher! You have embarked on a journey that is both challenging and immensely rewarding. As an experienced teacher, I want to extend my heartfelt congratulations for joining the teaching profession. Through this program, I will offer insights to help you thrive in your new role and look after your own well-being.

Happy Teacher
Good classroom management
Good classroom management is essential for a successful year. Here are some tips to help you manage behavior effectively.

Happy Teacher
Be succinct in your communication
Be succinct in your communication. This is a key skill for a teacher. Use clear and concise language to convey your message.

Happy Teacher
Keep redirection simple
Keep redirection simple and effective. Use clear and consistent language to redirect students when needed.

Happy Teacher
Use "Time out" effectively
Use "Time out" effectively to manage behavior. Establish clear rules and consequences from the start.

Happy Teacher
Here is a tip for you
Here is a tip for you: Be consistent in your expectations and consequences. This helps students understand what is expected of them.

Happy Teacher
NEVER be stubborn
NEVER be stubborn. Be open to feedback and willing to adapt your teaching practices to meet the needs of your students.

Happy Teacher
If you are a teacher
If you are a teacher, you are a role model. Your actions and words will influence your students, so be mindful of your behavior.

Happy Teacher
Chatterbox
Chatterbox: Be a good listener. Encourage students to share their thoughts and feelings. This builds trust and rapport.

Happy Teacher
Do not be a teacher
Do not be a teacher who is afraid to try new things. Embrace the challenges and opportunities of your profession.

Happy Teacher
Establish clear expectations
Establish clear expectations from the beginning. Communicate your rules and consequences clearly to your students.

Happy Teacher
Adapt to your students
Adapt to your students' needs and learning styles. Differentiate your instruction to ensure all students are engaged and successful.

Happy Teacher
Provide clear instructions
Provide clear instructions and feedback. Use specific and constructive feedback to help students improve their work.

Happy Teacher
Use visual aids
Use visual aids to enhance learning. Visuals can help students understand complex concepts and retain information.

Happy Teacher
Assess student progress
Assess student progress regularly. Use formative assessment to monitor student learning and adjust your instruction accordingly.

Happy Teacher
Time of your day
Time of your day: Plan your lessons and activities carefully. Allocate time for direct instruction, independent practice, and reflection.

Happy Teacher
Anticipate behavior problems
Anticipate behavior problems and have a plan in place. Use proactive strategies to prevent misbehavior before it starts.

Happy Teacher
Reinforce positive behavior
Reinforce positive behavior consistently. Use praise and rewards to encourage students to follow the rules and show good behavior.

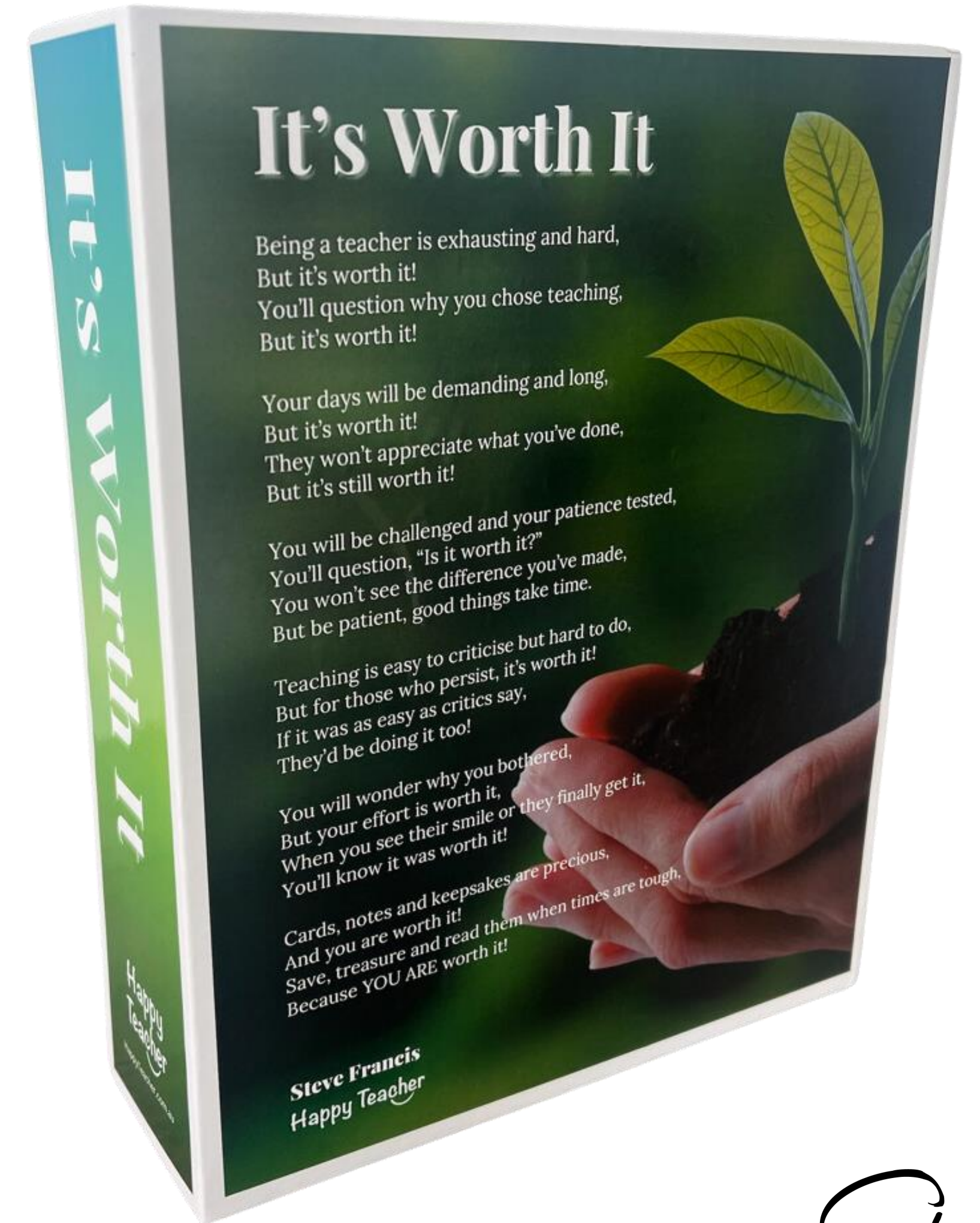
Happy Teacher
Students and parents
Students and parents: Communicate regularly with parents. Keep them informed of their child's progress and involve them in their child's education.

Happy Teacher
You will be a teacher
You will be a teacher. Embrace the role and the responsibilities that come with it. You have the power to make a difference in the lives of your students.

Happy Teacher
Do not be a teacher
Do not be a teacher who is afraid to try new things. Embrace the challenges and opportunities of your profession.

Happy Teacher
With the utmost respect and best wishes for your teaching journey, welcome to the teaching profession.

Happy
School



It's Worth It

Being a teacher is exhausting and hard,
But it's worth it!
You'll question why you chose teaching,
But it's worth it!

Your days will be demanding and long,
But it's worth it!
They won't appreciate what you've done,
But it's still worth it!

You will be challenged and your patience tested,
You'll question, "Is it worth it?"
You won't see the difference you've made,
But be patient, good things take time.

Teaching is easy to criticise but hard to do,
But for those who persist, it's worth it!
If it was as easy as critics say,
They'd be doing it too!

You will wonder why you bothered,
But your effort is worth it,
When you see their smile or they finally get it,
You'll know it was worth it!

Cards, notes and keepsakes are precious,
And you are worth it!
Save, treasure and read them when times are tough,
Because YOU ARE worth it!

Steve Francis
Happy Teacher

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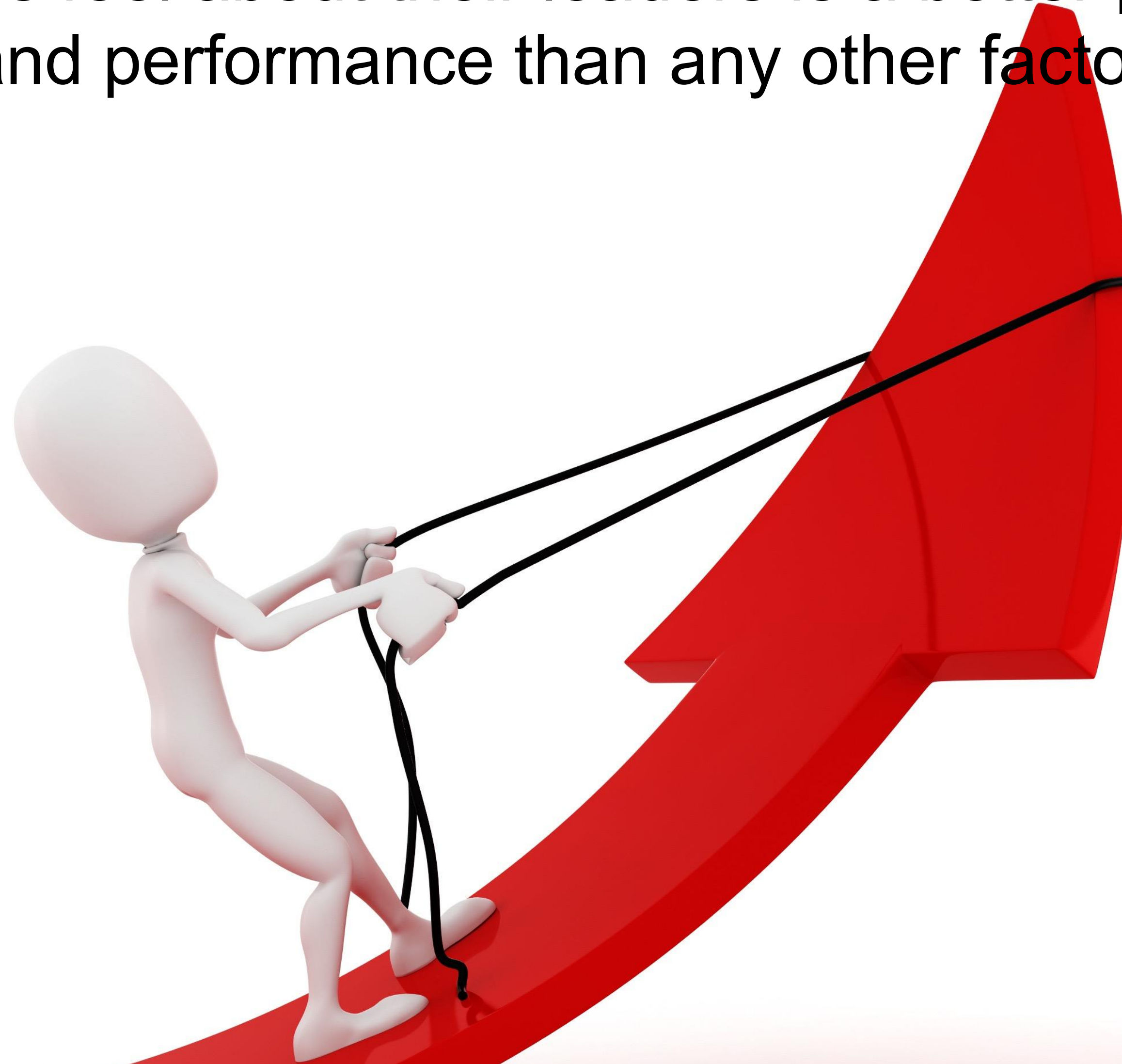
Leaders focus on

Building a POSITIVE School Culture



“How employees feel about their leaders is a better predictor of satisfaction and performance than any other factor.”

Blount, 2012






The number 1 factor in staff morale is leadership

Blount, 2012

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A high-angle, top-down photograph of a diverse group of young people, likely students, gathered in a circle. They are all looking towards the center and making peace signs with their hands. The background is bright and overexposed, creating a clean, minimalist aesthetic. The text 'We are in the People Business' is centered in the middle of the image in a bold, black, sans-serif font. In the bottom right corner, there is a logo for 'Steve FRANCIS' in a cursive script with 'FRANCIS' in a smaller, bold font below it.

**We are in the
People Business**

What is the difference between

LEADERSHIP
and
MANAGEMENT?

People need LEADERSHIP...
everything else needs to be managed

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Reactive
&
Last Minute

Proactive
&
Organised

Steve
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What's the most important decision you make every day?

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You CHOOSE your
attitude

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Attitudes are contagious!

Is your attitude worth catching?

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What 3 words would
your staff use to
describe you?

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What 3 words would you

like

your staff to say?

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Live the reputation you want to have

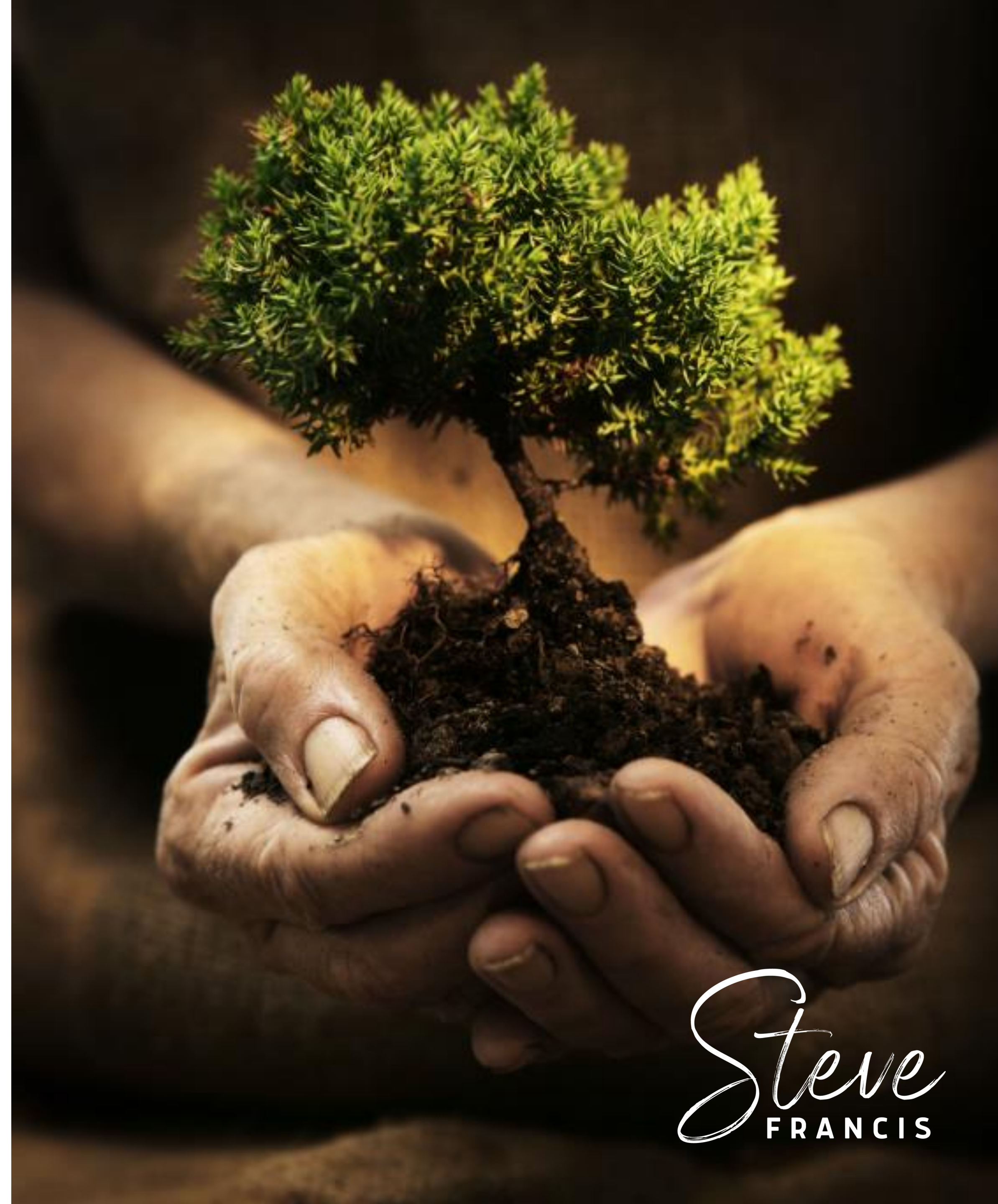


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The best time to plant a tree was 20 years ago,

the second best time, is today!

Chinese Proverb



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Leaders provide the
direction and
creates the environment that
promotes good teaching and
consistency across the
school

Kenneth Leithwood

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Service leadership



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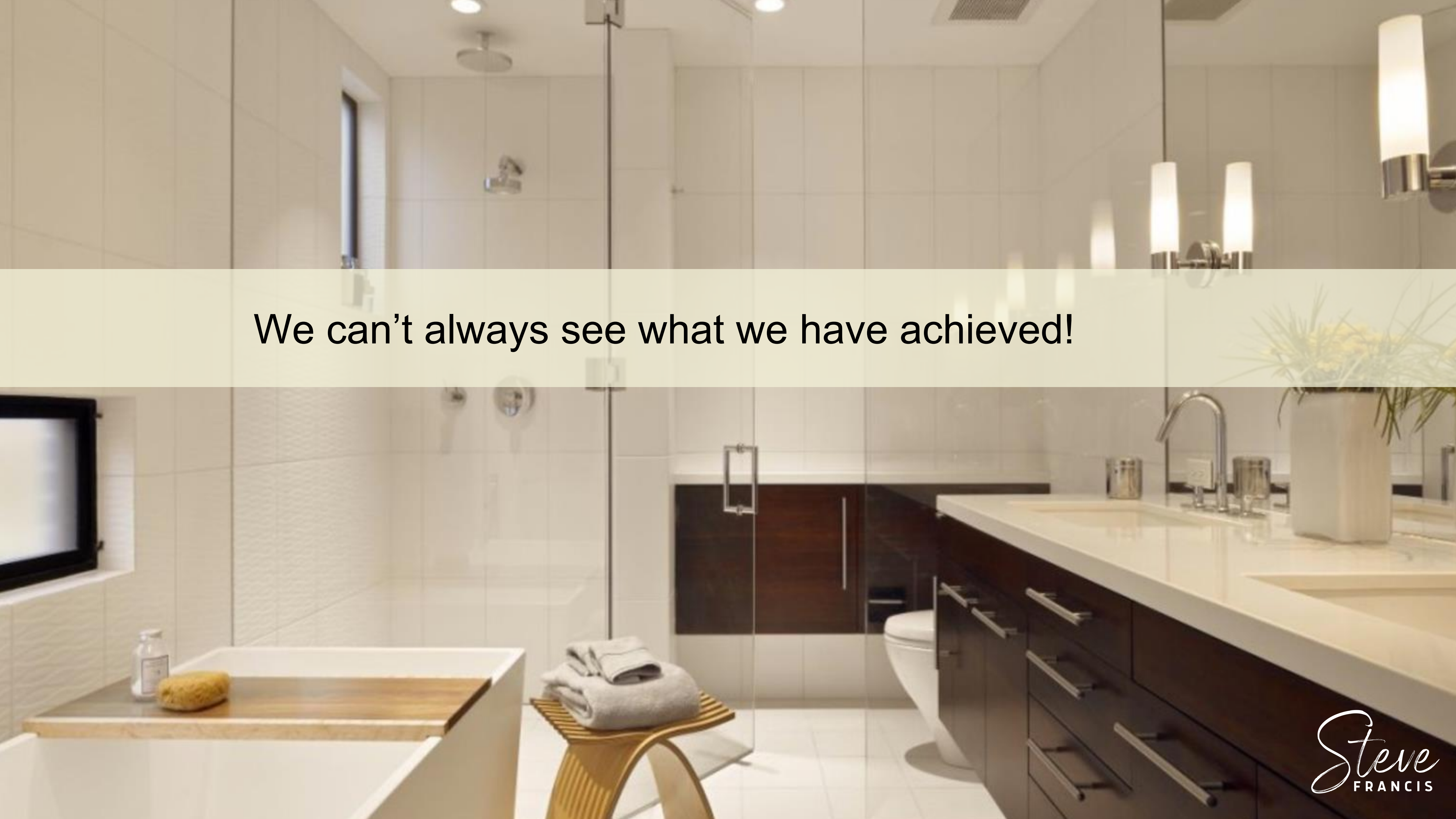


Watch out for interrupters with monkeys

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Job satisfaction

- My work is important
- I make a difference
- I belong and am part of a team
- I'm good at what I do
- What I do is appreciated



We can't always see what we have achieved!

5 strategies

- Connection
- Visibility
- Recognition
- Communication
- Alignment

Connection

A group of five stylized paper figures in various colors (tan, orange, black, gold, grey) are holding hands in a circle on a white surface. The background is a blurred, light-colored floor with shadows cast by the figures.

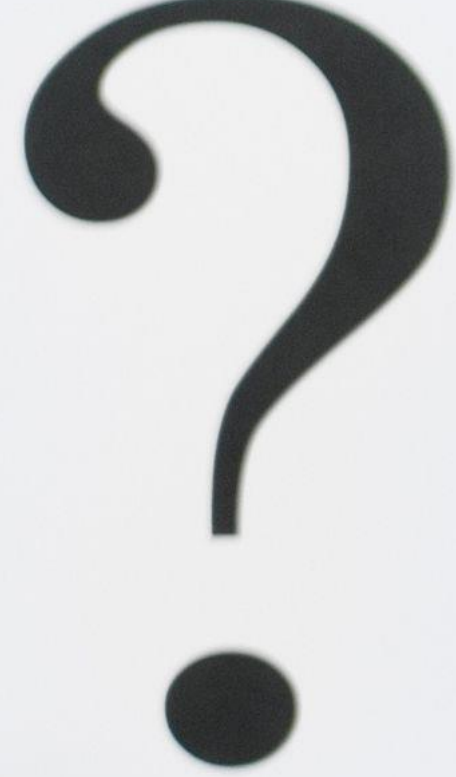
People don't care how much you know,
until they know how much you care.

People don't care how busy YOU are,
they care about how busy THEY are.



Visibility

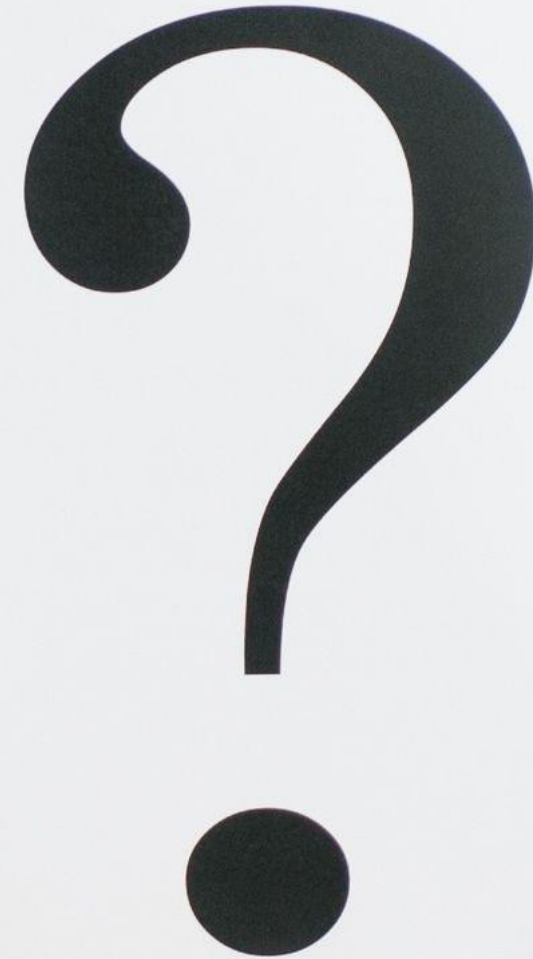
Staffroom



Classrooms



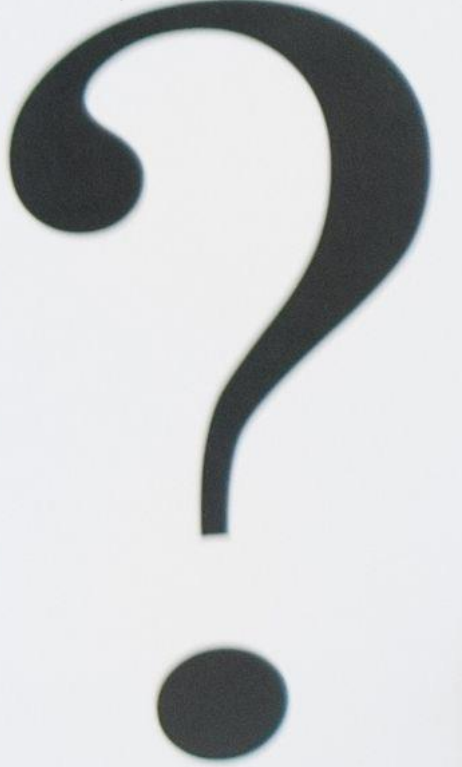
Playground



School gate



Socials

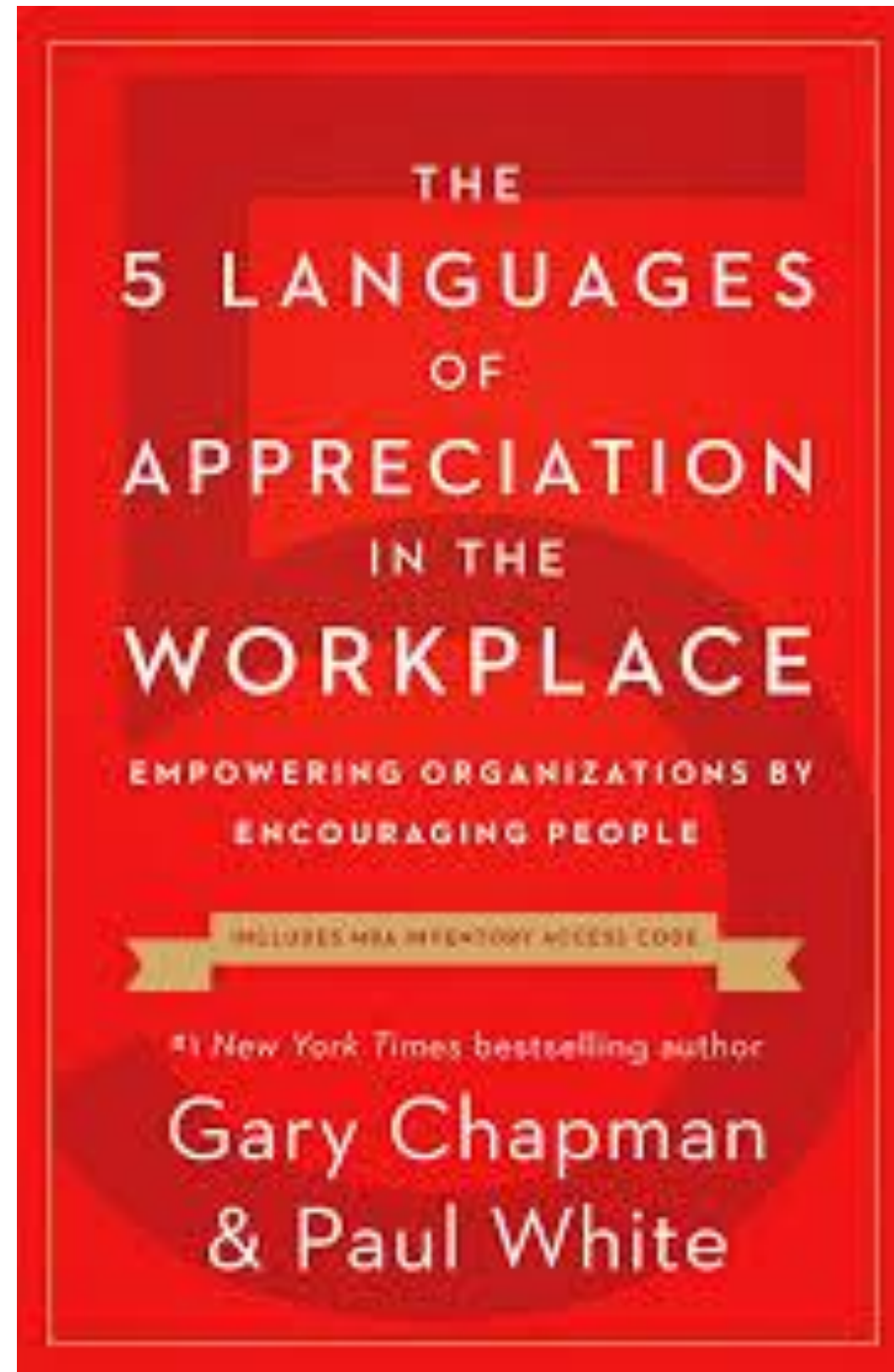


Recognition

Show we APPRECIATE
staff



Recognition



- Words of Affirmation
- Quality Time
- Acts of Service
- Small gifts
- Appropriate physical touch

Communication

What works at your school?

Staff Meetings
Team meetings
Briefings
Staff News
Email
Other

How aligned is YOUR Leadership Team?



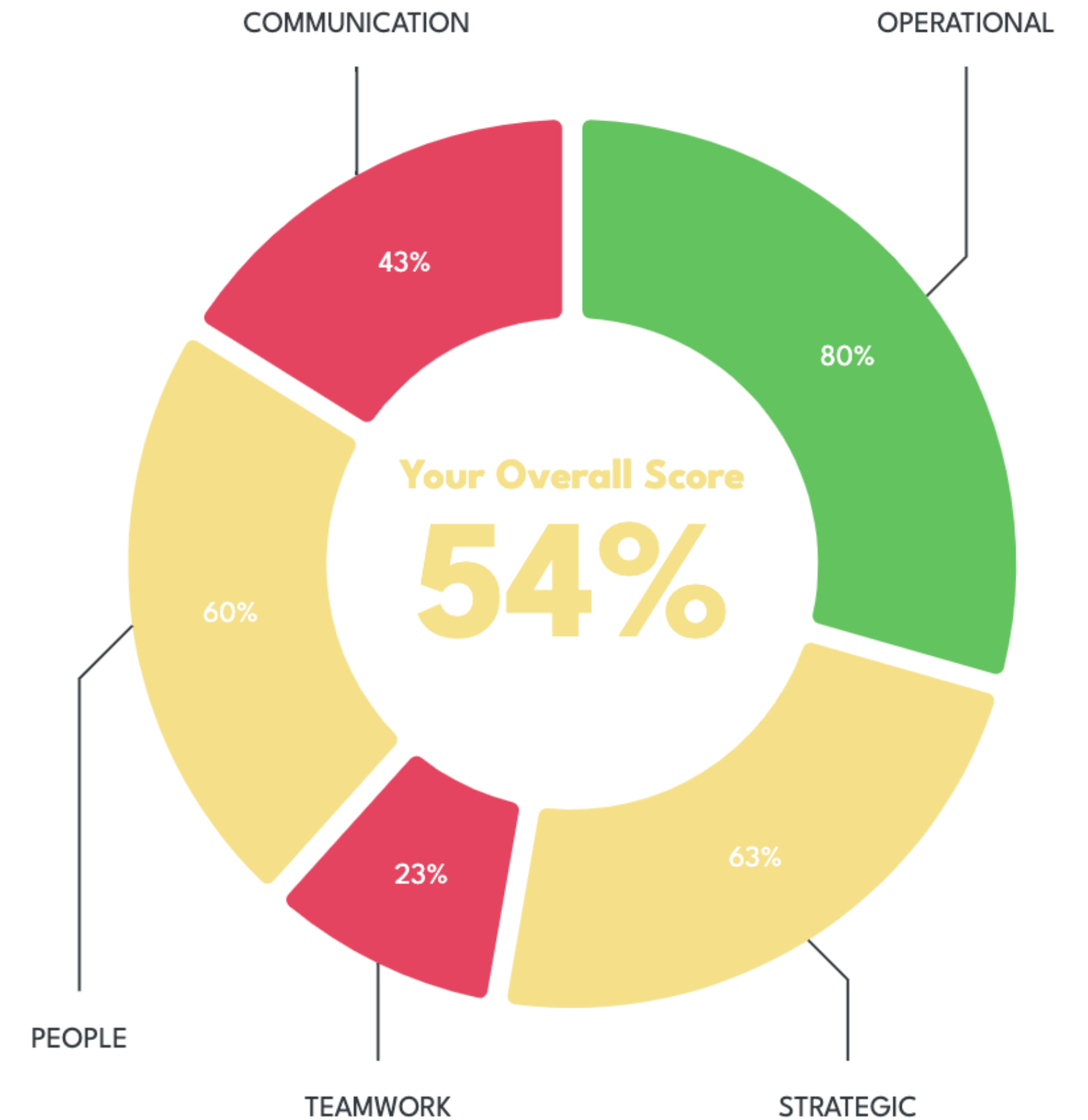
Thank you for completing the **SCHOOL LEADERSHIP TEAM SCORECARD**

Your full report has been emailed to bronted@macc.nsw.edu.au.

There is a clear connection between school effectiveness and leadership. School leaders have a massive impact. It is vital that the school leadership team are aligned and effective. This can be challenging in the busy and demanding context that we work in. As well as providing you with an OVERALL rating, this report is intended to provide you with a benchmark of how your leadership team is performing in five crucial areas.

Recommendations are then made on the MOST suitable LEADERSHIP SPRINTS for your team based on your results.

● Needs Attention ● Improvement opportunity ● Strength



Avoid D.H.S.

Deferred Happiness Syndrome

Life is NOT a Dress Rehearsal!



Steve
FRANCIS

4 goals on TO DO list

- 📌 Place to go
- 📌 Thing to do
- 📌 Learn something
- 📌 Better person





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Improve your staff wellbeing
and school culture

Happy School

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FREE Leadership Team Test



Leadership Team Sprints Info



Early Career Teachers Program



Work with Steve



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