

Knowledge in our Hands
Trans Tasman Principals Conference 2016
1- 3 June 2016 - Skycity Auckland

The buzz was noticeable as I entered the conference on Wednesday morning. After finding a table we were dazzled with the Manurewa Intermediate Culture Groups who opened the conference with an inspiring set of performances bringing cultures together.

With opening addresses by Ian Taylor who talked about quality education for all and child centred learning, Hekia Parata who talked about the necessity of investing in our education!! (I guess words often don't match actions). She also talked about the need to collaborate not just with teachers who we get on with but teachers from across the school. The opening address was finished with words from Dennis Yarrington from the Australian Government who talked about social capital, networking, well being, having the best people working with our children and parent engagement. The scene had been set for what would no doubt be an inspiring 3 days.

While the first presentation didn't quite inspire the crowd there were certainly some interesting points made.

Georgette Muheir - In Our Lifetime: From Institutions to Families.

While I didn't find this to have much to do with leadership it was food for thought.

- 80% of institutionalized children are not orphans, they have at least 1 living parent. What is the reason for this? Do families see it as a way to give their kids a better chance of success?
- Institutionalized children are 100x more likely to get trafficked. Why put more money into these institutions? Would it not be better to invest in the families?
- Many people who are involved in the setting up and running of institutions have an economic interest in the place rather than a social interest. Should we not replace institutions with community initiatives?
- 97.5% of children in institutions after the 2004 tsunami were put in by own families to get an education.
- Orphanages are great money makers. The majority of staff are volunteers so wages don't need to be paid. No background checks are done of these people leaving children very vulnerable to predators who see these places as easy targets. Orphanages often recruit kids offering shelter and food. Children are then malnourished and photographed which are then sent out for funding.
- There is evidence that sex offenders are opening institutions for the purpose of offending. There is a need to look at why and how institutions are being opened.
- Georgette encouraged people to look at how we can support families to have children in homes and the need to put resources in to assist them.

Three speakers stood out for me throughout the rest of the conference. They all told great stories and got me thinking about how I can work with my team to become more effective. Below is a short report on each of the speakers.

Sam Johnson - Creating a Generation that Serves

Sam Johnson is a social entrepreneur focused on community building, talent recruitment and resilience and regularly advises non-profits, corporate groups and government agencies on community mobilisation strategies. He's most well known for founding the Student Volunteer Army that over the past five years has shattered the stereotype typically attributed to younger people in New Zealand and currently works with Kiwi Connect in creating high-talent bridges between New Zealand and the world.

Sam told us about his experiences in the roles he has had in crisis management and leadership.

- People are just people. They shouldn't make you nervous!
- In a system that is driven by academic success we must realise the powerful skills the unskilled have. Are we giving our students the opportunity to excel in areas where they have skills? We must look beyond such things as National Standards in order for all kids to succeed.
- The biggest barrier is attitude. With the right attitude anything is possible. Look at the way people support each other after disasters. Wouldn't it be great if we worked so collaboratively everyday. What could we achieve?
- Sam got us to think about a crisis that changed us. What crisis has changed you? Was a very interesting exercise to go through. I challenge you to talk with people about a crisis that has changed you. Did it change you for the better? How did you manage yourself and others?
- Sam coaches people to lead. Relate this to schools. Are we giving people the opportunity to lead? Do we use the skills that we have around us to their fullest potential? Often we look to outside agencies for support. Do we have those skills in our own backyard?
- When a disaster happens we should be looking for opportunities that arise. Don't waste a crisis! What can we learn? Who did we learn from? What can we do to improve?
- There are 4 areas that contribute to a healthy life: Health, work, family, friends. We can only have 3 working at once. How do we prioritise?
- Sam shared with us some video from Alan Watts: Tragedy and Hope - check them out on Youtube

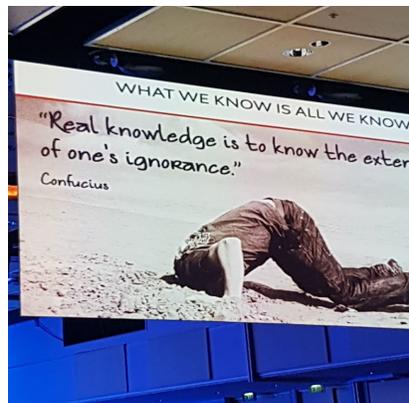
Four quotes stayed with me from Sam's talk:

- ***Start with desire and things will happen.***
- ***I'm not young enough to know everything anymore!***
- ***Who are you?***
- ***Give people courage to make tough decisions.***

Michael Henderson - Rigour, Ritual, Repetition and Rhetoric; How to Understand and Lead Your Culture to Inspire Your People to Meet Any Challenge

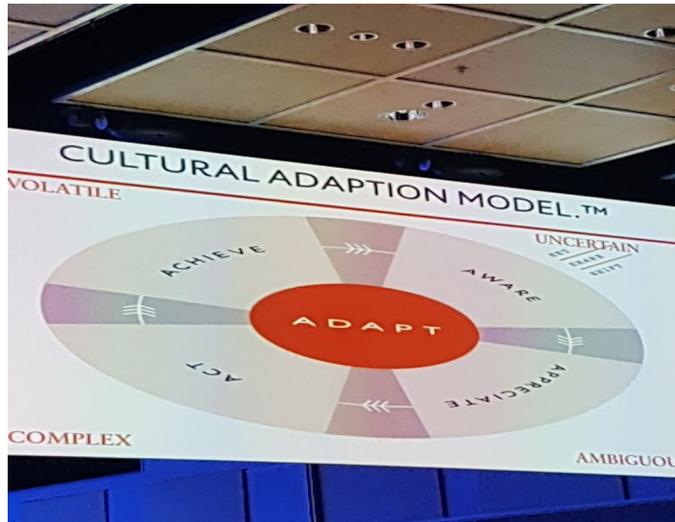
When it comes to organisational culture, few people can bring the in-depth knowledge and experience that an Anthropologist can. When this cultural expertise is mixed with extensive business experience, a unique combination emerges. A combination that is embodied in Michael Henderson.

- Culture is about people caring about people.
- Culture can kill companies and schools.
- 75% of top 500 companies won't be around in 2020 because of culture not changing with the times.
- Culture must stay in the forefront.
- 92% of all organizations settle for ever age culture.
- Believe: influences and leads to how we behave. What stimulates you?
- Behave: how we be dictates what we have.
- Belong: if someone smiles it is the beginning of someone who belongs.
- Humans judge on credibility/capability and approachability.
- That is how you build a great culture.
- Culture needs to be re-visited often. Last years success doesn't determine this years.
- Culture isn't what you design, it's people's response to it.

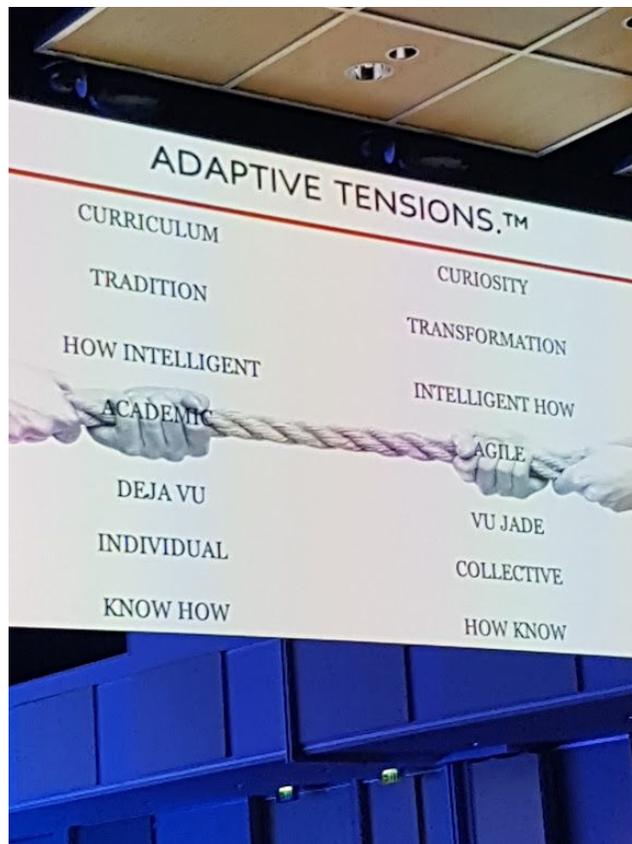


- **Are you capable of changing fast enough?**
- **Mindset:** We've always done it this way.
- **Mindshare:** What do you think?
- **Mindshift:** What if we did

Be Aware, Appreciate, Act, Achieve



Adaptive Tensions - what makes it difficult?



“How to find knowledge is more important than know how to.”

John Edwards and Bill Martin - Schools that Deliver

John Edwards has always been fascinated with the beauty of the human mind. He began his working life as a research metallurgist. He has worked as a teacher and department head in schools; in state, national and international curriculum development roles; and has written books and textbooks for schools. Through his extensive university career he has been one of the leading research grant recipients in cognitive science in Australia.

Bill loves working inside schools to build positive learning environments for children. He has done this for 49 years. He taught in primary and middle schools for 17 years, was a secondary assistant and high school principal for 16 years. On two occasions he led large schools to win State and National Blue Ribbon awards for excellence. Since 2003 he has worked with over 180 schools across six countries to support efforts to create powerful learning cultures.

The Lifecycle of Groups

Forming, Storming, Norming, Performing

Forming

- *Agreeing to do something together.*
- Congeniality, Cooperation
- Uncertainty, Excitement
- Agreements are made

Intellectual Cooperation

Every voice heard and respected

Skilled consensus

Validated process to form shared vision

Storming

- *The struggle to break free from current reality.*
- Challenge to mindsets, possible confrontations
- Surfacing of egos and factions
- Use/abuse of power and politics
- Temptation to go back, start on something new.

Holding our nerve, confidence in pits

Celebrating the behaviours of the storm

Collaborative school-based action research

Bringing worlds best into our school

Norming

- *Emergent consensus*
- Agreed way forward
- Collaboration emerges
- Much commitment, some compliance, some resistance
- Planning together.

New systematic structures and mental models are embedded

The knowledge is in our hands

Backing ourselves

New performance norms established

Aligned implementation

Confidence that our vision is achievable

Performing

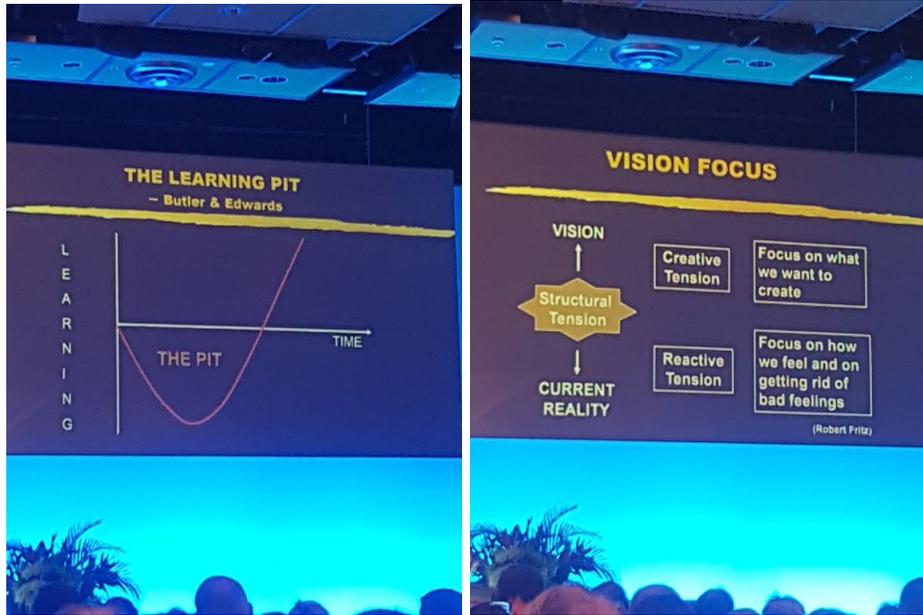
- *The enjoyment of your work.*
- Working to a plan
- Collective sense of achievement and satisfaction
- Synergy starts to emerge, life gets easier.

Know our plan, work our plan

Continuous cycles of action learning

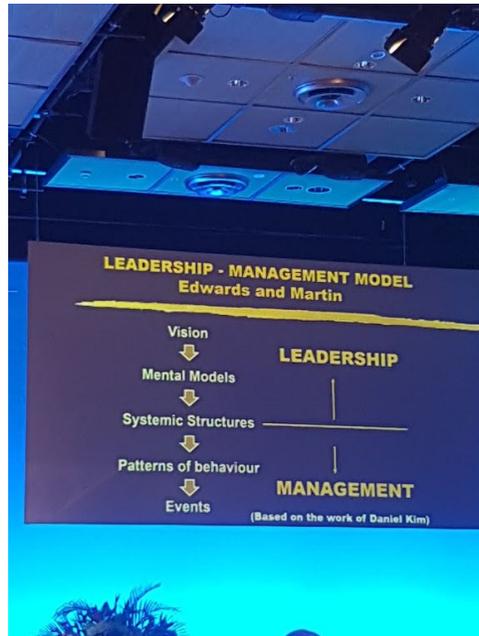
We are delivering what matters

This is the way we do things around here



- Frustrating and confusing kids is part of our jobs. We have to learn - not just the kids.
- Every kid has a right to come out of the pit in some way intellectual.
- Testing should focus on the future of the child.
- Do not bog people in current reality. Don't look at where you went wrong look at where you want to be.

Leadership vs Management



Bill finished with a very touching experience he had in a lunchroom that led him to become a leader not a manager.

Their talk was very inspiring. So much so I have gone out and purchased their book. I look forward to having the opportunity to hear these two again.

The Trans Tasman Conference was a great opportunity to catch up and meet new colleagues. The chance to network with people from all over the country and Australia away from school was a great chance to take a look at what I can do better in my school. I have already put a lot of the learning into action and was very pleasing to see my leadership team taking on board the feedback I was able to give them from the conference.

A huge thanks to APPA for giving me the opportunity to attend such a wonderful conference.

Thanks also to NZPF for putting the whole thing together.

Lastly thanks to the sponsors for making it possible. While I didn't win any of the prizes I have moved on and appreciate the support you give us all.

Chris Herlihy
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