



WHICH PART OF 'COME WHEN YOU LIKE' DON'T YOU UNDERSTAND?

What Happened?

As a site *Learning to Learn* Leader in a Phase One school I knew used and believed the 'rhetoric' of *Learning to Learn*. I spoke often to staff about involvement in *Learning to Learn* being invitational, a choice of how where and when. At the same time I really expected them to take up the invitation, and pretty much on my terms. I never said this but I think the 'field' or culture said this. So when I said 'come play when you are ready' they knew that this wasn't authentic, because it was contrary to so much of school culture, which had always been a kind of one in all in approach to projects and ideas. Having become passionate about curriculum and learning through work in equity I had believed that there were non-negotiables and answers, that all must follow. I had learned to soften the 'you will' aspect of leadership and be a nicer leader, more caring, but underneath I still expected to get my own way. The invitation was a path for me to be a generous leader, not a path for real choice for teachers. Authenticity is everything and it wasn't there.

I have realised this - that the deep layer of authenticity was missing due to a confluence of events: Working in *Learning to Learn* and talking about the concept and feeling the meaning for others; talking about leadership at my site and at a number of district sessions; and learning about the 'field effect' and the power of established fields. Suddenly instead of knowing about being invitational I felt what it would mean, look like, sound like... and knew that I had said the words only as a strategy to involve others and not as an authentic invitation into learning. There is a difference. Sharing and using strategies is really about leaders wanting to have their view prevail. Being invitational became a strategy.

Why do you think this is a significant change?

For me this deeper understanding of the idea of being invitational repositions so much I know (or thought I knew) about leadership and leadership culture. It has given me another taste of felt meaning and while before I would have said authentic behaviour is important, I now think authentic intent is imperative and see within the culture and 'fields' that we work this is not easy to achieve.

How do you know this has made a difference?

This learning hasn't made a difference to anything yet because it is a new insight. I think however that it has highlighted the need for me to rethink some issues about leadership. I still believe strongly in invitational. Next time I work with teachers on this basis, I will think beyond the language and make it genuine and also have the radar out for when it becomes a tool or strategy of a 'nice', benevolent, even understanding, leader.

It all reminds me of how deeply we mistrust the learning of individuals and how much we like to see group learning, consistency and compliance.