



The leading magazine for Education PAs & Admins

EDPA

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Finding your voice: speaking with authority so people want to hear

Some essential leadership advice

Cultural awareness in schools

The rise of the smartphone

Work SMARTER not harder



**Transferable skills—
a PA's own 'apps'**

Welcome to EDPA in 2018



Angela Garry—Editor

Hello to all our readers! Welcome to this term's issue of EDPA, the leading publication for PAs, Secretaries and Administrative staff working in education.

This issue is published at a different time than usual — in the first half of term, rather than the second half. This is part of our new scheduling, aiming to give you more time to read, and is in response to many of our readers who had commented that they had less time to spare during the second half of term because things were likely to be more rushed in their school office.

As always, the magazine contains pieces written by and for the PA, secretarial & admin community by school staff themselves plus worldwide experts and trainers, with the aim of bringing you articles to motivate, inspire, lead, teach, demonstrate, encourage and support you in your ever-increasingly busy roles in schools.

We welcome your involvement in the magazine. If you have a skill or some knowledge which you think would be of benefit to others, please share it with your fellow readers!

Please send any suggestions to editor@picaurum.com.

Onwards & upwards!
Best wishes to all,

Angela Garry
EDITOR



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Contents:

2	Welcome / Contributors	17	The EDPA cartoon
3	18 Happy Habits for 2018	18	Some essential leadership advice
4	The PA's transferable skills	20	Organising your "to do" list
6	Have you seen your desk lately?	22	Quotes for leading
7	50 powerful things to say daily	23	Your optimum working rhythm
8	Are your pupils safe?	24	Stop clowning around and work SMARTER
10	Being a school administrator	26	Speaking with authority
11	Do you have a fixed or open mindset?	28	It's break time!
12	The rise of the smartphone	29	A former principal writes
15	Cultural awareness in education	30	EDPA Editor's Update
		32	CPD resources / Moving forwards

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- **Terri Fishbourne** is an Executive Assistant who has worked in two schools and several organisations in industry for 20+ years in the USA.
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- **Tim Gerrish OBE** is a Safeguarding expert and works with Keeping Children Safe as their lead consultant for international schools to better protect children globally.
- **Ellie Griffiths** is a former PA to the Principal of an Academy in West Midlands, UK, where she developed and led a school PAs network.
- **Cathy Harris** is an award-winning Executive PA and author of two books, based in Johannesburg, South Africa.
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EDPA Regulars:

- **Andy Case** is a cartoonist, illustrator and music mogul by night, and talented teacher by day. He is the author of a book for small children, and is working on more volumes for the near future.
- **Tandy Hanff** is EDPA's resident in-house IT guru and self-confessed geek, with 20 years' self-taught computing experience.
- **Angela Garry** is EDPA's editor, author of "Brave PAs" and "The PA & EA Circus", and a global PA Trainer, with 24 years' experience in admin & PA roles. She runs publishing house Pica Books www.picabooks.co.uk



18 happy habits to cultivate in 2018

Happiness is an aspiration that most people share: no-one wants to be sad and depressed. We've all seen people who are always happy – even amidst agonising life trials. This doesn't mean happy people don't feel grief, sorrow or sadness; they just don't let it overtake their life.

Here are 18 things happy people make a habit of doing which you might like to adopt in the coming year:

1. **Adopt Self-Care:** Take care of your mind, body and health. Get regular medical check-ups. Get plenty of rest. Drink lots of water. Exercise your mind by continually energising it with interesting and exciting challenges.
2. **Appreciate Life:** Be thankful that you wake up alive each morning. Develop a sense of wonder towards life. Focus on the beauty of everything. Make the most of each day. Don't take anything for granted. Don't sweat the small stuff. Learn to live in the present moment and cherish it. Don't live in the past or the future.
3. **Be Considerate:** Accept and respect others for who they are as well as where they are in life. Be a kind and generous spirit. Help when you are able, without trying to change the other person. Try to brighten other people's day.
4. **Be Optimistic:** Find the positive side of any given situation – even though it may be hard to find. Know everything happens for a reason. Steer clear of negative thoughts – replace them with positive thoughts.
5. **Be Persistent:** Never give up. Face each new challenge with the attitude that it will bring you one step closer to your goal. Focus on what you want, learn the required skills, make a plan to succeed and take action. We are always happiest while pursuing something of value to us.
6. **Be Proactive:** Accept what cannot be changed. Don't waste energy on circumstances beyond your control. Accept your limitations as a human being. Take control by creating the outcome you desire – rather than waiting to respond.
7. **Be Self-Confident:** Don't try to be someone that you're not. Honesty is the best policy. Determine who you are on the inside – your own personal likes and dislikes. Be confident in who you are. Do the best you can and don't second guess yourself.
8. **Choose Friends Wisely:** Surround yourself with happy, positive people who share your values and goals, who will encourage you to achieve your dreams, help you to feel good about yourself and lend a helping hand if needed. Always make sure your loved ones know you love them even in times of conflict.
9. **Do What You Love:** How many of your friends dislike their jobs? We spend a great deal of our life working so choose a career that you enjoy – the extra money of being in a job you detest isn't worth it.
10. **Forgive:** Holding a grudge will hurt no one but you. Forgive others for your own peace of mind. When you make a mistake – own up to it – learn from it – and FORGIVE yourself.
11. **Laugh:** Don't take yourself – or life to seriously. You can find humour in just about any situation. Learn to laugh at yourself – no one's perfect.
12. **Learn:** Keep up to date with the latest news regarding your career and hobbies. Try new and daring things that have sparked your interest – don't sit still and stagnate.
13. **Love Unconditionally:** Accept others for who they are. Don't put limitations on your love, even though you may not always like the actions of your loved ones.
14. **Meditate:** Meditation gives your very active brain a rest. When it's rested you will have more energy and function at a higher level. Types of meditation include yoga, hypnosis, affirmations, relaxation tapes, visualisation or just sitting in complete silence. Find something you enjoy and make the time to practice daily.
15. **Mind Your Own Business:** Concentrate on creating your life the way you want it. Take care of you and your family. Don't get overly concerned with what other people are doing or saying. Don't get caught up with gossip or name calling. Don't judge. Everyone has a right to live their own life the way they want to – including you.
16. **Show Gratitude:** Count your blessings; All of them – even the things that seem trivial. Develop an attitude of gratitude for your home, work, family and friends. Take the time to tell them that you are happy they are in your life.
17. **Take Responsibility:** Happy people take responsibility for their moods, attitude, thoughts, feelings, actions and words, and are the first to admit when they've made a mistake.
18. **Solve Problems Creatively:** As soon as you face a challenge get busy finding a solution. Don't let setbacks affect your mood, instead see each new obstacle you face as an opportunity to make a positive change. Learn to trust your gut instincts – it's almost always right.

Begin today by taking responsibility for your happiness. Work on developing these habits as you own. The more you incorporate the above habits into your daily lifestyle – the happier you will be.
Most of all: BE TRUE TO YOURSELF.



A PA's Transferable Skills

Ellie Griffiths writes on her experiences of being a Principal's PA at Q3 Academy, the Personal Assistant role and the enormous range of transferable skills you earn from being one.

Walking into my first day at Dartmouth High School (which became Q3 Academy in 2008) was the most exciting day in my working life. I had worked in Recruitment and Human Resources before in a number of different sectors but Education was new for me.

Right from the beginning I was learning transferable skills that would help me develop within the role, becoming more efficient and effective with every risk I took and every mistake I learnt from.

My first day consisted of managing some very conflicting personalities and administration tasks, which needed

attention to detail and diplomacy. Within a Personal Assistant role you have to be adaptable and flexible not only to change and time but also to people and their wants and needs.

You have to be able to give the impression of a graceful swan when your legs are going ten to the dozen under the surface of the water, and most importantly you have to be able to defuse a situation whether it is a crisis or a celebration.

I have been a career Personal Assistant for the past 10 years, and I have loved every single minute of it. I have earned numerous transferable skills that will help me time and time again throughout my working life. Skills including:

Time Management – I have to be able to say yes all the time, no is not in my vocabulary. My capacity is never ending to the team that I assist and that never waivers, it is about working smartly. Making sure you remain 3 steps ahead, making endless lists of things that need to be

completed (and sometimes jobs that have been done to help stay motivated). It is about utilising the tools you have been given to manage your time more effectively.

I use Outlook every day which allows me to categorise my emails, apply rules which move those emails that don't apply to me to other folders and place reminders in the diaries to ensure I meet conflicting deadlines for Policy changes, press activity and meeting requirements amongst other tasks.

Communication – During my time at Q3 Academy I have had to communicate to a range of audiences with varying messages. On occasion I have covered lessons and delivered countless training sessions to both staff and students of different ages.

I have adapted every time and changed the message to ensure it has come through clearly and eloquently.

Communication within any organisation can be very difficult to

get right; therefore it is also important to strategically communicate information to key groups that need it to ensure there are no loose ends. For example, if you know there is a visitor coming to meet with the CEO, arrange for the Reception team to meet them, sign them in effectively and provide information about their visit, what they will be doing whilst there and their itinerary for the day. This should make others happier that they are kept in the loop. To be a good communicator you also need to be a good listener. This allows colleagues the opportunity to soundboard ideas or release frustrations to ensure they are able to apply themselves in their roles across the Academy. It also gives them the reassurances that they are listened to and therefore important no matter what role they have within the Academy.

Leadership – You are a leader without even realising it. You have to manage upwards as well as downwards during your everyday working life. You are someone that people look to for answers and solutions to problems.

You are often tasked with completing complex projects that need the buy in of all staff within an organisation; to do this you need to show leadership skills to get those individuals to help. Coercion and tactfulness are called upon at these times.

Adaptability – I would consider myself to be very adaptable to change. I have been in the enviable position of having been involved in numerous changes within Education. This included changing from a comprehensive to an Academy and then recently into a Multi Academy Trust. I also know that two days are never the same and that you have to be extremely flexible in the way that you work. My typical day consists of writing my to do list and then rewriting it 100 times depending on what the outcome has been the previous day.

Project Management is part of any Personal Assistant's role even if I do not realise I am doing it. You have to be able to apply the skills of time management, working capacity and adaptability to ensure all projects are

prepared in time and within budget.

In my time within my role I have also found that a number of soft skills can be brought into any job, an example of this is a sense of humour and a playful outlook, which is appreciated.

In a world of conflicting and demanding requirements from Government and tightening budgets, having the ability to make people smile in times of adversity really helps. It defuses the situation and allows others to breathe and remember why they got into Education in the first place..... so that no child is left behind.

Ellie Griffiths has recently left her role at Q3 Academy after 10 years, to take up a new Business Development Manager role with a council.

EDPA wishes her all the very best for her new career and the challenges that await her!





Have you seen your desk lately?

Take a moment to look at your surroundings— need a de-cluttering? Cathy Harris offers a 5-step clean-up.

Can you see the top of your desk or does it look like a wasteland of varying versions of reports, old minutes, file folders, business cards, newspapers, magazines and the random elastic band and paper clip?

If you're like many busy Management Assistants, cleaning up your desk is not a high priority for you.

At least not until you might be found guilty of lost documents or you reach your breaking point of frustration!

If that time has come, schedule out time in your diary to tackle the hot mess on your desk.

To help you along here are a few easy steps to get you there and help you take control of your workspace again.:

Step 1: Collect. Scan your desk and get rid of all the rubbish (the old

minutes, duplicate copies and old outdated information and magazines that you no longer need. Recycle where you can.

Step 2: Sort. Start sorting the items, grouping like with like. For example, all To Do items go in a pile, all things to file go in another. If you're unsure, put it back in the pile. The key is to keep your momentum going and not get stuck on this step.

Step 3: Establish. Find a home in your workspace for the all items you are keeping. Where to put these items depends on how often you use them:

- Daily – on top of your desk or within arm's reach.
- Weekly – close to your desk, such as a drawer or filing cabinet.
- Monthly, termly or annually – least accessible area of your office, like a cupboard.

Step 4: Action. Before you go out and buy storage containers or file folders, first check how much space the items will take up and determine whether you have a place to store them. This

will save you tons of time and aggravation. Now you can start putting things away.

Step 5: Review. Allow a week to pass and assess if your desk is still clutter-free. If not, think about what's not working and make the necessary changes and adjustments. Remember, there is no perfect way. It's all about what works for you and your style.

Cathy Harris is an Executive PA at Discovery Invest based in Sandton, South Africa. Winner of the SA National Secretary of the Year in 2006. She is the author of two books, the first in a series of 4 books, 'Mobi-Jane: Self Development and Innovation', and 'Executive Secretary Guide to Creating an Internal Assistant Network'. Cathy travels internationally, teaching, inspiring excellence and sharing her passion for her profession of over 36 years amongst her peers.

50 Powerful things to say daily

Kim Quindlen suggests you adopt some of the following and say them to yourself daily, as a route to success and happiness.

1. I am enough.
2. I am not wrong or weak for feeling things deeply.
3. I deserve to be happy.
4. But that doesn't mean I automatically deserve to have whatever I want, whenever I want.
5. Tomorrow is always a new day.
6. Everyone I know is a fully, three-dimensional person with feelings and insecurities and a life story that I haven't heard – even if I don't like them.
7. I can do this.
8. Bravery doesn't usually come from feeling brave – it comes from doing something despite how afraid I feel.
9. I cannot settle for mediocrity.
10. The people I look up to didn't get there by sitting on their asses.
11. Sometimes a really tiny and simple thing can completely turn someone's day around.
12. Being in love will not always be easy and effortless.
13. I am me, and that can be a lot of different things, and that's wonderful.
14. Being able to admit when I'm wrong is way more important than being right.
15. Sometimes I will try stuff that I won't be automatically good at. But that doesn't mean I can't try to get better.
16. It is okay, and even necessary, to walk away from people who hurt me.
17. The online version of my life is not what gives me meaning.
18. Even my ideal dream job is still going to be incredibly difficult, because anything worthwhile takes blood and sweat and tears.
19. When I am going through heartbreak, it means I am experiencing one of the most universal feelings on the planet. I am not alone.
20. Sometimes maintaining friendships in adulthood is hard and that's okay, as long as I keep trying with the people who matter to me.
21. The people who really love me are the ones who are telling me what I need to hear, even if I don't want to hear it.
22. It's normal that sometimes I truly crave credit or validation or praise. It's part of being human.
23. I can be a different version of myself in front of different people, and it doesn't make me any less authentic.
24. This doesn't have to be where I end up if I don't want it to be that way.
25. Sometimes, I'm just going to have a really rough day, or week, or year. But I will survive it. I've done it before and I'll do it again.
26. My heart is fragile but my strength is unwavering.
27. I'm allowed to leave a job I hate to find something better.
28. No matter how careful I am, I'm going to make mistakes. What's important is how I handle the aftermath.
29. The times when I really don't want to get out of bed are usually the moments when it is most crucial that I do so.
30. Anxiety and depression and other mental health related struggles don't make me weak. I just need to remember to be strong enough to ask for help.
31. It's important to tell the truth, especially to myself.
32. Everybody is scared. I'm not the only one.
33. Sometimes feeling lost is a good thing.
34. Usually when I'm heavily judging someone, what I'm really doing is projecting something that I dislike within myself.
35. Money can make things easier and less stressful, but it won't make me happier or more fulfilled.
36. I'm allowed to be proud of myself.
37. I should never take advantage of the fact that my loved ones are only a phone call away.
38. The only time procrastination feels good is in the moment.
39. I can't change the fact that my body will age, but I can control how I handle it.
40. No matter how happy or put-together they seem, everyone is struggling with something, just like me.
41. Regret is much scarier than failure.
42. When I make others look good, I look good too. And it's a much more joyful way to live.
43. Admitting that I care about something is so much more fun than trying to play it cool.
44. It's important to be humble, but it's also important to stand up for myself when I'm being treated unfairly.
45. Just because someone is cold to me doesn't mean I need to be cold back.
46. There is no better quality than making others feel like, and understand that, they matter.
47. Laughter should always be a high priority.
48. Being warm to others can take me so incredibly far.
49. I am here to do something.
50. Looking for ways to feel grateful for things, instead of frustrated over them, can drastically change the way I look at the world and the way I feel about my life.



Are your pupils safe?



Safeguarding is a huge issue in every school, and many EDPA readers are directly involved in handling police checks, checking visas and qualifications for teaching staff at their schools.

Safeguarding expert Tim Gerrish looks at the procedures international schools need to have in place to protect their students, and which local schools can also learn from.

There have been a number of high profile cases in recent years that have directly centred around child safety in schools. Some of the worst have been associated with international

schools.

As we have witnessed, media attention of such cases can reach a global scale. Whether the publicity is accurate or not, what it does do is raise awareness of potential risks to schools and parents, which can be a catalyst for helping to raise standards and increase the responsibility of vigilance.

The challenge for international schools:

There are challenges international schools face when it comes to safeguarding children, but none of these challenges are an excuse for a school not to have a child safeguarding policy in place.

All school employees, including the board of governors, caretakers, teachers, drivers, cleaners, caterers, senior leaders and teacher assistants,

have a duty of care to the children in their school.

The most common challenge for international schools lies in location. International schools operate under a wide variety of governments and, as a result, face different legislation (such as age of consent), as well as different standards, behaviours and support provision.

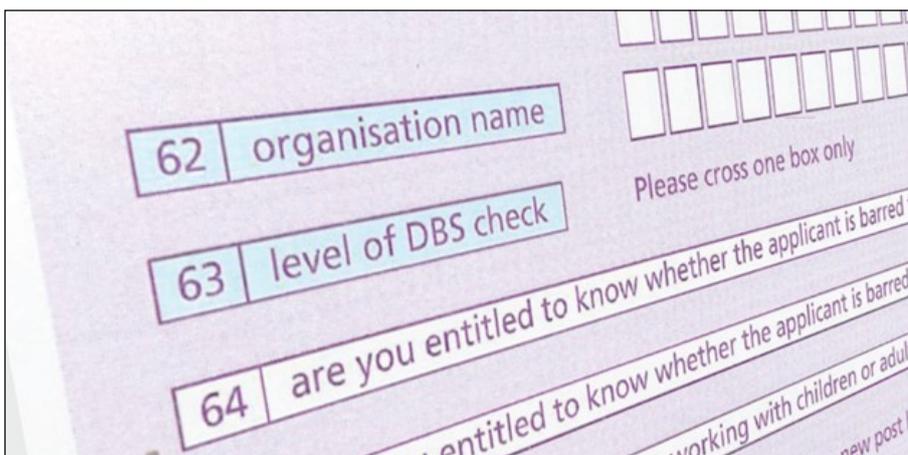
In the UK, for example, if a school leader has a concern about possible child abuse, they will know how to access professional services within social welfare, law enforcement and child health to gain advice and support.

In many countries, such services are good. However, in some countries these services are not always available, or to a standard that an international school might require.

In these cases, the responsibility for child safeguarding will have to fall entirely on the school. International schools in these locations are potentially the most vulnerable to child abuse, particularly those schools that are ill-prepared.

In addition, the nature of international school life means that there is a higher than normal transition of both teachers and leaders.

This, along with language barriers between staff members (particularly



support staff who are often local people and may not be English language speakers), can create challenges for sustaining a well-informed child safeguarding culture throughout a school.

Being prepared

A school can never be 100% sure that a child abuse incident will not happen within its walls, but a school needs to be able to say with confidence to its parents that it is doing everything it can to prevent any incident ever occurring.

Some international schools are doing some incredible work, but for others, the child safeguarding policy is something that is kept in a drawer and only referred to when an incident occurs.

A child safeguarding policy should be a part of the whole school culture so that everyone is alert to possibilities, and everyone, including parents, know the school's standards, expectations and procedures.

Child safeguarding – whose responsibility is it anyway?

Everyone, at all levels, has a responsibility for child safeguarding in a school.

Senior leaders have the responsibility to ensure procedures are established and practised daily, that all staff within the school is suitably trained, and that the culture of the school is a proactive child safeguarding one.

Particular roles within the school,

such as Human Resources or those people who manage extra-curricular activities, have another level of responsibility.

Teachers and teacher assistants need specific disclosure training as they are the person most children will turn to for help.

Procedures that should be in place:

Every international school should have a child safeguarding policy, a code of conduct, and robust reporting measures in place.

This does not simply mean having a set of documents on a shelf; it is about having a set of procedures and a culture that are implemented and practised day in, day out by every single member of the school, in every area of operation.

All members of school staff should receive adequate training, so that they know what signs of child abuse to look for, and what to do if they are suspicious.

Appropriate training helps the school community to adopt a spirit of vigilance that becomes a first line of defence.

A well-prepared school will be visibly recognisable as a proactive child safeguarding organisation; something that every parent and visitor should see evidence of.

What signs can parents and visitors look for?

As a parent myself, when my kids were about to start school, the first

thing I did when I visited a school was to say to the Principal: "Show me your child safeguarding policy; I want to see what you do."

Schools vary in their procedures, but here are some other indications to look for to give you reassurance that child safeguarding is actively and constantly practised:

Some schools share a letter or verbal instruction with all visitors as they arrive which outlines the rules they are required to abide by during their time on the school premises.

Such rules will include, not taking photographs of the children, only using the identified toilet facilities, etc.

You may see child-friendly posters and signs in the public spaces of the school, which should have easy-to-understand designs for non-English-speakers, that clearly represent child safeguarding messages.

You may see certification or accreditation for achieving and maintaining child safeguarding practices

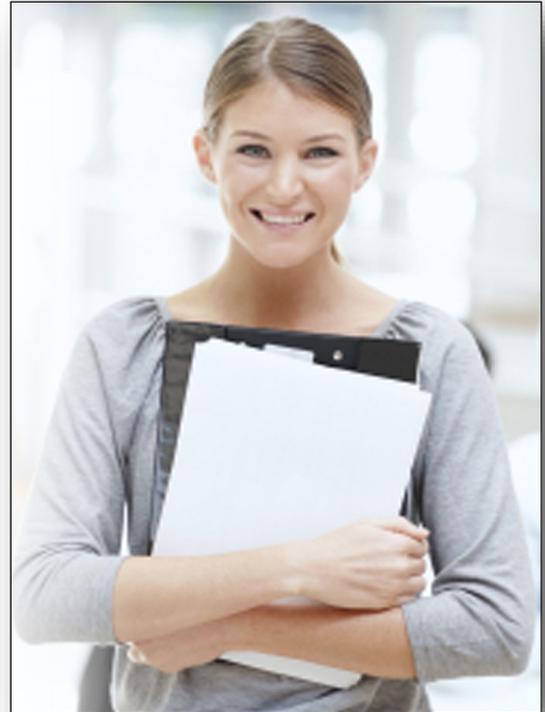
These are simple but powerful examples that a school is pro-actively engaged in child safeguarding.

The more we read and hear in the news about child safeguarding issues in schools, the more demanding parents will become; the more they will ask about child safeguarding standards, and the more likely they will be to search for accredited schools.

On entry to our school, you must:

- not take photographs or videos of any child without the permission of the Headteacher
- only use the designated adult toilets whilst on campus and under no circumstances enter the children's toilets or changing room areas
- not be alone with any child
- not touch any child or invade their own, personal space
- not take any contact details from any child

Being a successful School Administrator



This issue, we hear from School Administrator Ann, who relates her experiences of her first year working in a primary school in the UK's Home Counties.

Ann has been working for at her current school for just over a year. As it is a fairly small school, the school office consists of Ann and the School Business Manager. Ann originally saw the job advertised in a local free paper.

She has been working in schools, both in the state and independent sector, for more than ten years.

Ann writes: "Like many school office staff, I started working in schools after the birth of my children as it fitted in with their education – prior to having children my working life was very different.

"I had worked for the a government office since leaving college (including some time abroad) and then worked for a television station for eight years.

"After that I worked for a large firm of management consultants and then changed careers to work in HR for two companies closer to where I lived.

"The skills required for this job include endless patience, good organisational skills and the ability to adapt to ever-changing situations and workload.

"Good IT skills are essential, particularly as a large amount of the pupil data is kept on a database.

"You need to have the ability to remain calm and you are often required to be sympathetic but firm. A major part of the job is dealing with children, so approachability is a key part of the role.

"Since starting at the school we have introduced a new lunchtime ordering system and there have been a few staff changes.

"We have also undergone major building work to accommodate more nursery children.

"My role, whilst largely staying the same in other ways, has had to

accommodate these changes.

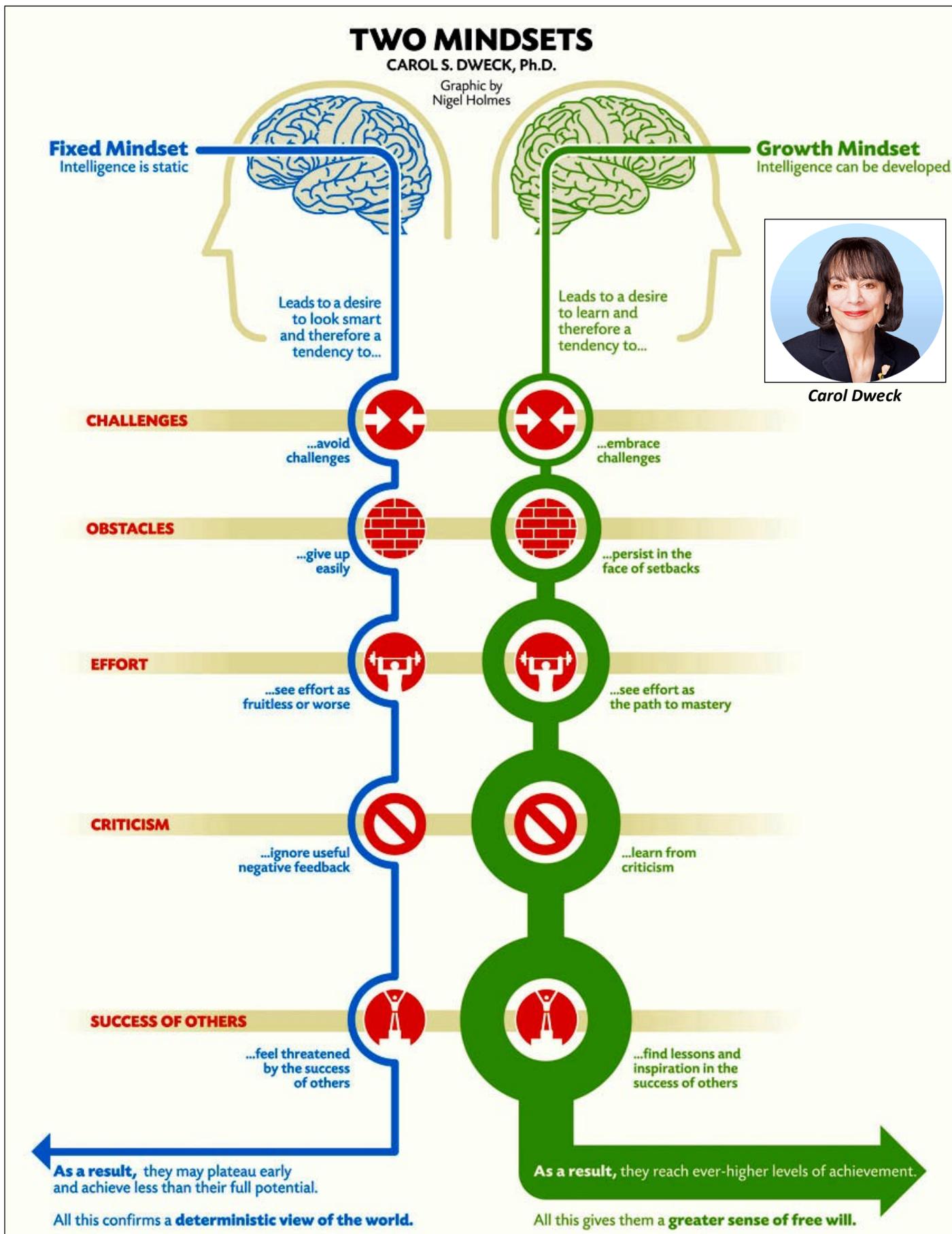
"Without a doubt, the best things about working in a school are the children and interacting with them is very rewarding.

"Some of our children have difficult home lives and school is a safe haven for them – it's important that all the school staff work together to create a friendly environment for both children and parents."

If you'd like to share some of your experiences of working in your school, please get in touch!



Do you have a fixed or a growth mindset?





The Rise of the Smartphone

The Smartphone has dramatically changed the way that modern PAs work. It has increased our mobility; it gives us access to a world of information at our finger tips. Anel Martin looks at how you can make best use of yours.

Productivity Apps have made us more efficient. We can run an entire office from a device in our pockets.

We all consider the following criteria to select a smartphone:

- Cost;
- Compatibility with your other personal and office devices (iPhone & Mac/Android or Windows & Windows PC);
- System integration and security requirements at your company;
- Main purpose of device – what are you mainly using it for?
- Battery life;
- Physical size;

- Aesthetics;
- Brand and operating system preference;
- Usability;
- Local maintenance and support on your preferred brand.

Identify apps that make your life easier

Apps have been revolutionary; they have made our devices so much more useful. I would recommend that as a start you find a good scanner app, find productivity tools that suit your needs like planners, list makers or note applications.

If your headteacher travels regularly, download a currency converter and a time zone application. Also download items like Team Viewer and ES File Explorer to make the management of your data easier.

Apps can bring you food with one click, send a car to pick you up, arrange your laundry and home cleaning requirements or even get your groceries delivered

(depending on the country that you are in),

In today's world the apps available are astounding and it would be impossible to give you a run-down of everything that is useful and available.

You need to explore the PlayStore and Apple Store to find these gems that can make your life easier, you also need to talk to other people about the Apps that they are using. This is usually the easiest way to find out about something that could be useful to you.

A great source for finding out which are the best apps to use will be the children at your school— what are THEY using? Find out!

Mobile package

Ensure that you are on the right mobile package which suits your needs. If you are using your private phone for work it is standard practice that you are either refunded for work calls or that your employer picks up a portion of the contract.

Purchase suitable accessories

It is always advisable to get a screen protector, a solid and hardworking case, a power pack and extra chargers. A cracked screen is not only inconvenient but also looks scruffy and a glass screen can cut you.

Configure the phone to your company requirements and personal preferences

Ensure that your phone is set up properly. Make sure that you are in compliance with any company regulations regarding devices. Adjust settings like time out screens, home screens, ring tones, security settings.

Set alarms for timeslots that you need regular reminders of or simply your alarm clock in the morning. Use this as an opportunity to make the phone as personalised and comfortable as possible for you. Make your life easier by using all the functionalities that your phone provides. Experiment!

Set up your various email accounts and social media

profiles

Modern Smartphone enable us to access our entire digital life from one device. Take some time to set up your school and private email, your school’s social media profiles and messenger groups on apps like WhatsApp.

Keep your phone’s software up to date

When you are prompted to do so, update your phone’s software.

Your phone always works better and faster with the most updated software.

Be aware that these are usually bigger downloads that should be done on Wi-Fi if possible.

Keep a good charging schedule, have chargers in your car, office and at home.

A smartphone can be very heavy on power. Ensure that you charge regularly and that you have extra chargers where you may need them. E.g. your office and car. Ensure that you have a spare charger also for whatever type of smartphone your headteacher

uses, in case he / she becomes stuck without one!

Also invest in a power pack that you can keep in your work bag or handbag. Find out if your phone has a power saving mode which reduces the apps that take up a lot of energy. This is a great setting to use in an emergency.

Make backups of your device regularly

Most devices have the ability to back up to the cloud. Do this regularly so that if something happens to your phone you can still access your important contacts as well as your photographs

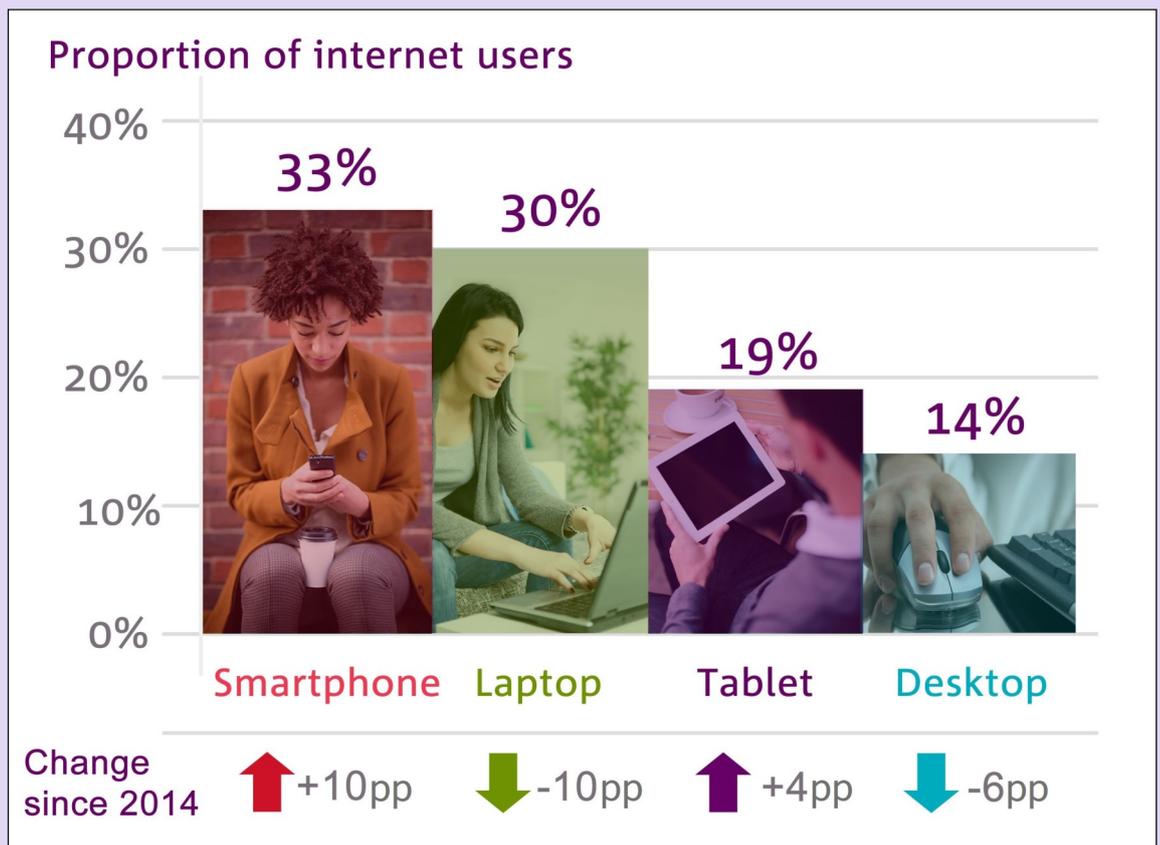
Decent security

Make sure that you have a pin on the phone and that you keep your device safe. Smartphones are a huge risk to company’s information. So be responsible with controlling access to your device and keep it safe.

Set up messenger groups for teams and big projects

In my team we currently use

33% of internet users view their smartphone as their most important device for getting online



multiple WhatsApp groups for projects and it works very well.

It reduces the amount of mail, keeps everyone in contact and is ideal for short messages and sharing in a “broadcast” style.

Interesting future trends include:

3D and curved screens (OLED)

Screens are a very interesting development area. We are already seeing curved screens and OLED and soon we will have 3D available.

The idea is that screens will become more ergonomic as the technology

develops.

Charging film

This is a film that covers the screen (just like a screen protector), able to charge using sunlight or florescent light. Reducing your need to charge at the plug.

Wireless charging

Another major innovation. The phone will come with a docking station, you will simply place the phone on it and the device will charge. No more messy cables

everywhere.

Wearables

We are already seeing these emerge. A good example of this is the Google Glass (eye wear) which is called augmented reality. Also some familiar examples like Samsung Gear, Apple Watch and Fitbit. We will see a massive boom in this field in the years to come. It will also influence diagnostic medicine as the technology in these wearables becomes more advanced and specific.

Using your phone for appliance integration

Switching your kettle on from bed in the morning using your phone. Switching on lights in your home before you get there, all from your smart device. It is not the future, it has already arrived. The Internet of Things (IoT) will create a world where our devices big and small talk to each other creating endless possibilities.

The goal is to be smart with your smartphone, make it work for you! Get the most from technology and explore it. You can have your entire office (and more) in your pocket; make sure that you are not just using your phone for Facebook, calls and WhatsApp!

Anel Martin is a multi-award winning ex-Personal Assistant who now works as a full time trainer. She has extensive experience in the profession and is widely considered as an industry expert. She is South African and has recently moved to Dubai.

Anel is the author of 'The Executive Secretary Guide to Building a Powerful Personal Brand'. She is one of the Directors of the Isipho Admin Bursary (www.isiphoadmin.org.za) and is currently involved in the World Administrator Summit 2018.





Cultural awareness in education

Award-winning PA and Author Sue France writes on how to create a positive culture of learning in a multicultural and diverse community — your school.

Your school is a lot more than simply a place to learn for pupils/students. It is a self-contained culture with traditions and expectations. Your culture should be one of positive attitudes and behaviours, adaptable to change, forward-looking and actively work towards enriching the lives of students, teachers and all admin staff.

The effect of a positive school culture on the behaviours of everyone cannot be understated as it promotes the student's ability to learn and leads to a bully-free school.

There are several definitions for culture such as:

- Deeply embedded beliefs and assumptions;
- The unwritten rules;
- "The way we do things around here";
- The social glue that holds people together.

The school culture refers to the way teachers, students, admin staff and

parents relate to each other and work together as well as the set of beliefs, values, and assumptions they share.

To create a school culture of everyone adopting predictable positive behaviours, and being dedicated to quality learning as well as a continual pursuance of excellence, you need a strong leader – the Principal or Head Master – who has a personal assistant who "has their back" and can be their eyes and ears as well as confidante and strategic business partner.

Everyone involved in the school should have high expectations of themselves, including staff and students, and the students should know they are supported by caring staff.

What should your school leaders be doing?

In order to create, cultivate, and sustain a culture of achievement, school leaders should:

- Create an environment of open and honest communication which in turn creates better relationships and then trust develops;
- Keep their eyes and ears to the ground via their personal assistant;
- Focus on the needs of the pupils/

students;

- Communicate a consistent, focused message;
- Listen to people's issues, fears, and concerns and make sure they know they are being heard.

Students and staff will probably come from many different backgrounds and situations.

Some students may require special assistance or have been victims of bullying or been a bully, they may lack motivation, or come from homes where they are neither encouraged nor helped.

All staff need to make a conscious effort to be proactive and create a culture in which obstacles do not become the dominating factors in students' lives and sustain a culture of achievement as well as improvement.

It is important to be culturally aware and demonstrate awareness to everyone around you that you are genuinely interested and curious to learn about different cultures, traditions and lifestyles.

Demonstrating this leadership style will encourage others to be like you as you set a good example of simply being an interested and interesting human being.

To encourage cultural awareness all involved should be curious about differences.

Strategies to build trust

There are several strategies that you can use to build trusting relationships with diverse students as follows:

- Take the time to learn the proper pronunciation of student names
- Encourage the practice of speaking and writing clearly and using plain simple language
- The students should be encouraged to master English well for example, create a lunch time learning group with English speaking children helping non-English speaking children read and this will help with the attitude of collaboration and learning of both parties. This also helps create friendships and encourages coaching and mentoring amongst children.
- You may want to display international flags that represent the diversity of students such as on noticeboards
- Be "inclusive" and remain respectful of differences. Ensure that everyone is included within all aspects of the school.

A cultural attitude of respect, kindness and helpfulness should be introduced into all primary schools so it becomes a natural way of being and carries them through to secondary school and adulthood. The following strategy will help them to respect others and to help others who may need a friend or someone to listen to.

In this respect, I took my granddaughter to school one day and I noticed several yellow caps on pegs where they hang their coats and my granddaughter put one of the caps on and she told me that when she wears the yellow cap she is one of the 16 'helpers' that day.

I asked her what the duties of the 'helper' were and she told me that all 'helpers' have to help others if they ask for help, as well as seeking out people who may need help but were not asking for it. Also, they might see someone on their own, who needs a friend, etc.

I asked my granddaughter what happens when she is not wearing the cap and she sees someone who needs help and she told me she always acts like a 'helper' whether

she is wearing the cap or not and I witness this about her even when at home.

This is cultivating a wonderful culture where bullying is not tolerated and kindness, respect and friendliness is encouraged.

Another aspect of culture is the multicultural differences of nationalities with different traditions, values, ideas and behaviours.

All schools need to be culturally aware and to promote cross-cultural understanding of each other and promote curiosity and discovery. Students need to be encouraged to actively nurture and develop skills of interaction, acceptance and inclusivity and use this knowledge to be able to live and work effectively in the global workplace that they will eventually enter.

Students sometimes make fun of one another; engage in bullying, and otherwise act in inappropriate behaviour. It is the adults in the school who need to lead by example and act in collaborative ways for a positive learning environment.

The following strategies will help:

- Everyone to understand the school mission and values and even be involved in creating them. Use signs around the school to set the right tone and for a successful implementation of positive and encouraging values for example promoting a safe environment. To ensure buy-in and enforcement get students, teachers and staff alike to help make, post, and enforce the signs. A sign could be: "Bullying is not tolerated - please show kindness and respect in everything you do and say."
- Everyone experiences anger from time to time, but being a leader (and we are all leaders no matter what our title is) requires the ability to control your temper - even when you feel it is justified. How you keep your cool in infuriating situations will lead others by example. It's about the future and finding the solution and not about the past and who is to blame.



- As an inclusive, collaborative and multi-culturally aware assistant you can use your networks and discuss with other schools/ educational organisations what they do with regard to cultural awareness, diversity and inclusivity and share what you do with them.

About the Author:

Sue France FCIPD FInstAM INLPTA is a Trainer, coach and conference Chairperson, and Neuroscience enthusiast.

She is the Creator of the ‘Workation’ training, and Author of award winning “The Definitive Executive Assistant & Managerial Handbook” and “The Definitive Personal Assistant & Secretarial Handbook 3rd edition.

Sue is a Qualified FCIPD Learning & Development Practitioner and coach, and a Certified Neuro Linguistic Programming Master Practitioner, was awarded The UK Times Crème/DHL PA of the Year in 2006, and is also a Certified TetraMap® Facilitator.

For 20% discount on both of Sue’s books you can



put the word FAVOUR (in caps) on Sue’s website www.suefrance.com There are also free downloads available on the website.

Contact sue at sue@suefrance.com or call +44 (0) 7747 118914.

The EDPA cartoon

Here’s the latest in our series on the life and times of a school PA, by talented teacher and illustrator Andy Case.

It is the first day of the new term in the Head’s PA’s office...



andycasestudios@gmail.com

God’s Right Hand by Andy Case





Some Essential Leadership Advice...

... for new School Principals and their Assistants.

Maxine Driscoll, Founding Head of School at Australian International School Phnom Penh and Founder of 'Think Strategic for Schools', shares her advice.

Starting as a new Principal or Head of School is both exciting and challenging — and being their Assistant can be equally so.

I hope both you and your Head are ready to enjoy an exhilarating and stimulating learning curve, working together.

1. Start by building trust and confidence with your school community. Be confident and approachable.
Spend time to learn the school's culture, mission and vision.
Be visible, ask questions, value what you see and give praise for effective teaching and learning practices.
2. Develop authentic professional relationships with students, staff and parents. Listen carefully to what they are saying to you.
Always show you are interested and try to discover if there is an underlying problem or issue that you or your team can solve.
Immediate action taken to solve problems is always seen as positive by the school community.
3. Remember that you are responsible for everything that happens in your school.
Don't use 'blame' in any situation, instead ask yourself "What is my responsibility with this problem and what strategic thinking or strategic actions can I take to improve the situation?"
4. Understand that the bottom line in any school is learning and the #1 reason you are there is for the students.
5. Develop effective teams; look for unseen talents in your teachers and utilise them. Empower formal and informal leaders.
Trust and delegate responsibility.
6. Establish a professional learning community in your school and always model learning.
Research best practices for 21st Century teaching and learning and ensure the school has a professional development plan in place for teachers and parents.
Quality teaching is the best way to improve student learning so help your teachers be the absolute best they can be.
7. Ensure you focus on what is important rather than what is urgent every day.

Research the school's strategic plan and focus on what needs to be achieved to improve student learning including student engagement, student motivation and student well-being.

8. In your first month, collaborate with your executive team to create a one-year action plan based on the school's strategic plan. Plan 90-day reviews, celebrate your successes and reschedule those goals that were not achieved. It's ok to be agile and flexible as long as you focus on what it most important.

9. Surround yourself with "can-do", forward thinking people. Do not be afraid to employ people more intelligent than you or with a different personality or learning style to you.

Different thinkers often see issues/solutions from different perspectives, which can be very helpful.

10. Define your own personal and professional goals each year. Revisit these goals weekly to keep you focused. Include health, fitness, rest, renewal and planned adventures in your personal goals as these will help you be alert, focused and creative.

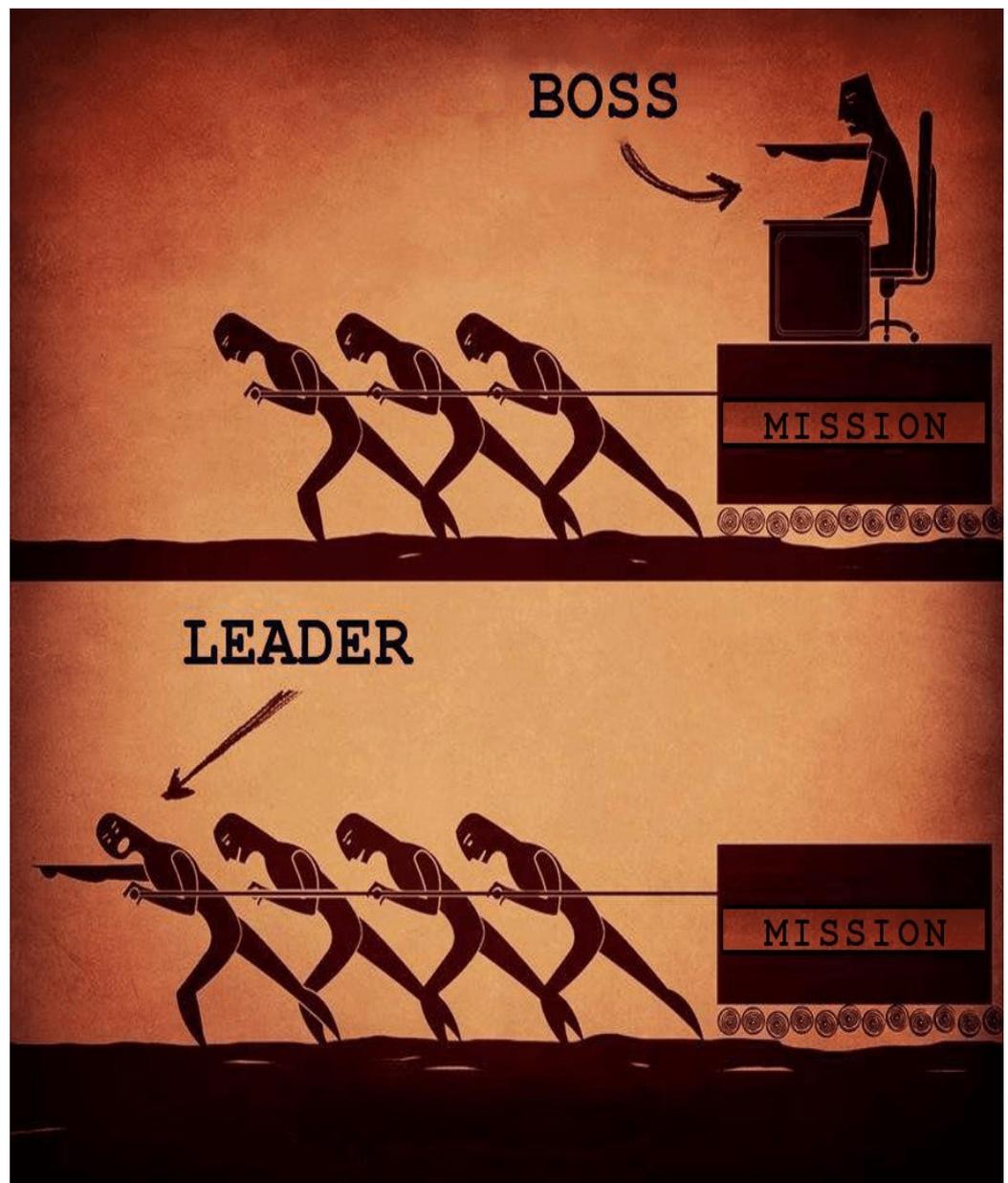
You can't lead others if you can't lead yourself!

- 11. Consider enlisting the support of a mentor. Find someone who you admire and trust, and ask them to mentor you. It can be lonely at the top!
- 12. Remember your ultimate goal is to leave the school in a better place than you found it. Be strategic. Work with your school board to create a new strategic plan to drive the school successfully into the future.

Building on successful leadership positions in independent and international schools in Australia and Asia over the past 30 years, Maxine Driscoll now leads a new global consultancy called "Think Strategic".

Her mission is to help school leaders think strategically about how to prepare their students for the future and to train great 21st Century leaders.

If you would like to read more great leadership advice from Maxine, check out her Blog at www.thinkstrategicforschools.com/blog





Organising Your “TO DO” List

We asked a group of PAs and EAs on LinkedIn to share their tips on keeping track of their seemingly never-ending 'TO DO' lists. Here's what they told us.

- Elaine: I find due dates don't usually work for me, I use outlook tasks and sometimes the electronic post-its or a notebook. The downside is I am constantly going through my list.
- Carol: I use a 3 column system headed Priority, Reactive and Other. Under Priority are 3 tasks that impact the business. Reactive are tasks that come in and need to be done soon, I also track things awaiting approval here. Other holds tasks that can be done later and the company won't grind to a halt if they are not done immediately. The important thing is to identify those tasks that impact the business. These change each week and there will be things that have to be dealt with which have time constraints - but that's what we do! I go through this list each week and make a note of those completed that week (helps at review time) and re-do the 3 columns. It worked for me when I moved from a long list as I could easily see the important items at a glance. It also helped to download at the end of the week so that I wasn't trying to remember something for the next week. I use an A4 book with the completed items on the left page and columns beneath. Left hand page has things to follow up.
- Lynn: I agree with paper and pen. The process of elimination. I jot down all the days tasks and tick them off as I get through them. There will always be a to do list, as there is always something to do. I prioritise what is NOW - immediate and balance the rest accordingly.
- Alexandra: I work off of the principles of the book "Getting Things Done" - which covers the art of effective time management. Consider checking this book out. It's not a difficult read and demonstrates how the to do list can evolve into projects, future wish lists, etc. I love this system and have no dropped balls as a result
- Nadia: The ability to prioritise is normally one of the top requirements for the role of an EA or PA and it is generally what makes them good at what they do. Being organised means having a To Do list and I don't see that that will
- Ogyan: The best answer you will receive on ALISON.COM with the course 'Introduction to Time Management'. You will find very useful pieces of advice!

ever change. As others have said pen and paper always works and the To Do list needs to be updated or revised regularly. I also use the column system but just two. Priority and To Do.

- Alice: What works for me is a great notebook and pen on the table. For urgent and more important issues I like to use the outlook tasks.
- Femi: As for me, all my 'to-dos' are classified into two categories though its conventionality is questionable: 1. Important and urgent work, 2. Important but not urgent work. So, priority should be given to those that fall under category 1, which includes answering telephone calls. As for items under category 2, they can be delayed till late hours of the day or even next day after critical examination. Conclusively, hard-working is good but working smart is better.
- Latisha: I use outlook to flag items that need attention and also a book where I write everything down. It is always a never ending to do list!
- Luciana: I use Microsoft notes, it's super useful!
- Katherine: I also use pen and paper and the rule - if it takes 3 minutes or less to do then do it - the rest are my priorities. I also only keep emails in my inbox that need action, all others get filed away. Remember if we didn't have a constant never ending 'To Do List' then we probably wouldn't have a

job.

- Begona: I use an excel file to organise the "to dos" by themes. It helps me right away to identify the priority. I keep track of comments based on the themes and actions agreed with the other part, where applicable.
- Jaymee: I use a post it note for my to do list. If it doesn't fit onto "ONE" post it note for the day - chances are it will be pushed to the next day. This also helps me prioritise the top 5. At the end of the day I have accomplished the most important requests and will handle the little requests first thing in the morning.
- Jenny: I am in the pen and paper camp. Crossing things off as I go, and keeping notes beside things as to where they're up to. (eg emailed/ waiting to hear / checking with so and so etc). I also use the 'if it can be done in a minute, do it now' rule which usually keeps my list at priorities. Smaller tasks really bother me just sitting there when they can be done in a moment.
- Ileana: I am an avid user of Outlook tasks. I like the fact that I can push out due dates if needed. Check off upon completion. Excellent reminder functions. Details. It does everything I need it to do. I do keep a manual telephone call log which I use sometimes when checking voicemails but even those I end up adding to my Outlook tasks.
- Ileana: Another old-fashioned process that I use where documents

are needed for my "to do"s. I use a follow-up office drawer with daily tabs to file the documents and pull out on the day the follow-up/to do is required. Extremely useful.

- Nadine: My first rule of thumb is if I can action something quickly on the spot, I action it. And I try to handle tasks once where I can. Each day I create a new page in my notebook and write my critical tasks at the top. These are my priority over everything else in my outlook tasks. Outlook Tasks is my home for my ongoing to do list and carry over items I have not completed. I learned a long time ago that I will always have a long list of to do items. In my experience that is just the nature of the beast. I used to resist and resent my to do list, but I've been working on my mindset and I find it helps to just make friends with my list and see it as a helpful tool rather than as something I never feel on top of. As emails come in I drag them straight into my tasks. I also add verbal non-urgent requests straight into my tasks. Each day I spend 15 minutes scanning and updating my list to prioritise and send updates. My list is sorted and categorised, which makes it easier for me to keep relevant stakeholders informed of my progress (this helps proactively manage expectations if I am stretched for time or anticipate any delays in completing non-critical tasks). As long as I am chipping away and making progress I am comfortable with my list.
- Michelle: I took a page out of project management and use a Kanban system. For email tasks I have my outlook folders arranged WIP (work in progress), Pending, Complete. For walk in interruptions and phone calls I use the electronic sticky notes, divided into the three categories.

What techniques and methods work for you? Please get in touch to share your tips and expertise!



As Personal Assistant to a Head teacher or Principal, you are in a prime position to become the leader of your school's Administration team. We've gathered some inspirational quotes on leadership to help uplift and motivate you.

You might like to focus on a quote each week and use it as a mantra will definitely take you to a new leadership level.

- If your actions inspire others to dream more, learn more, do more and become more, you are a leader. - *President John Quincy Adams, USA*
- Before you are a leader, success is all about growing yourself. When you become a leader, success is all about growing others. - *Jack Welch, former GE chairman and CEO*
- No matter who you are, no matter what you did, no matter where you've come from, you can always change, become a better version of yourself. - *Madonna*
- The task of leadership is not to put greatness into humanity, but to elicit it, for the greatness is already there. - *John Buchan, novelist, historian and politician*
- A leader takes people where they want to go. A great leader takes people where they don't necessarily want to go, but ought to be. - *Rosalynn Carter, former First Lady, USA*
- To lead people, walk beside them. As for the best leaders, the people do not notice their existence ... When the best leader's work is done, the people say, 'We did it ourselves!' - *Lao Tsu, Chinese philosopher*
- Education is the most powerful weapon, which you can use to change the world. - *Nelson Mandela, former President South Africa*
- As we look ahead into the 21st century, leaders will be those who empower others. - *Bill Gates, co-*

“

If your actions inspire others to dream more,
learn more, do more and become more,

YOU ARE A LEADER.

– *John Quincy Adams*

”

Quotes for Leading

founder of Microsoft

- Keep your fears to yourself, but share your courage with others. - *Robert Louis Stevenson, author*
- Everyone can rise above their circumstances and achieve success if they are dedicated to and passionate about what they do. - *Mother Teresa*
- Leadership is the capacity to transform vision into reality. – *Warren G. Bennis, founding chairman of the Leadership Institute at the University of Southern California*
- Innovation distinguishes between a leader and a follower. - *Steve Jobs, co-founder and CEO of Apple*
- I have three precious things, which I hold fast and prize. The first is gentleness; the second is frugality; the third is humility, which keeps me from putting myself before others. Be gentle and you can be bold; be frugal and you can be liberal; avoid putting yourself before others and you can become a leader among men. - *Lao Tsu, Chinese*

philosopher

- Leadership and learning are indispensable to each other. - *John Kennedy, former President, USA*
- A good leader takes a little more than his share of the blame, a little less than his share of the credit. - *Arnold Glasow, humourist and author*
- You have to be unique, and different, and shine in your own way. - *Lady Gaga*
- You can do what I cannot do. I can do what you cannot do. Together we can do great things. - *Mother Teresa*
- Train your staff so well that they can leave. Treat them so well that they won't. – *Richard Branson, entrepreneur*
- Leaders become great, not because of their power, but because of their ability to empower others. - *John Maxwell, author, speaker, and pastor.*

Please share your leadership quotes with us here at EDPA!



Your Optimal Working Rhythm

Terri Fishbourne writes on discovering your best ways of working within your day. Have you found YOUR optimal working rhythm?

Whatever your role in your school, you rarely just go to work and sit there for 8 consecutive hours and then go home (working like this is ineffective and just plain dangerous!). For one thing, you need to move around to prevent ill health effects like blocked veins and swollen feet – and for another, you need something to motivate you, plus gaps to break up your day.

To improve your focus and effectiveness, try to find an optimum working style; one that suits you (and your job description) the best. There are few ways to do this, listed below:

- Pomodoro technique: This popular technique breaks the work sessions into 25-minute chunks (one 25-minute session = 1 Pomodoro), while taking a 5-minute break between

sessions. Once you have completed four pomodoro (4 x 25-minute sessions plus 5-minute breaks), you can take a longer 15-30 minute break.

- 90-minute intervals: Our bodies work in 90-minute cycles – whether we are asleep or we are awake. This is what sleep researcher Nathan Kleitman found in his studies decades ago. These 90-minute intervals are the peak time of our focus and productivity, followed by a lower-energy phase of 20 minutes. To respect this natural rhythm inside us, work in 90-minute blocks, followed by a 20-minute break.
- 52-17: A study conducted by the Draugiem Group, with the help of DeskTime, an app for tracking one's work habits, found out that the ideal work length/break ratio for the most productive people was 52/17. In other words, after working for 52 minutes, the people took a 17-minute break. This

result was based on the analysis of the top 10% most productive employees.

- Your personal one: If any of the previous models didn't fit your style of working, define your own schedule. After all, what really matters the most is that you can focus on the right tasks and make progress on them.

There are also two things to remember regarding your work block length:

First, you want to make sure, you actually do something energising when you take a break between your working sessions.

Second, all the strategies listed in this piece assume that you use a timer. This way you know when to take a break and get up from your computer. You may find that a cheap kitchen timer will do perfectly for your needs. One handy hint: don't rely on the school bells as timer alerts – a few days or weeks into a new term, you'll probably not hear them, they'll be so well embedded in your day.



Stop clowning around & work SMARTER

A free excerpt from Angela Garry’s book “The PA & EA Circus: integrating the many parts of the Personal Assistant and Executive Assistant” - a professional development book for PAs, EAs, Secretaries and Admins in any industry or organisation.

Don’t be a clown — plan to work SMARTER, not HARDER.

Give yourself a break when you are doing your planning. Don’t plan unrealistically – and make sure you plan adequately for whatever you need to do. Not making plans won’t get you by – but making the wrong kind of plans is equally bad.

So, when you are planning, a good thing for you to do is to always set yourself targets and goals that follow the SMARTER acronym: I hate acronyms usually, but for this chapter I will make one exception, as I believe it is actually really useful...

The idea of Managing by Objectives stems from Peter Drucker’s 1954 book “The Practice of Management”. In the ensuing years the SMART acronym came into common usage within goal setting and performance appraisal or management environments, and was later extended into SMARTER.

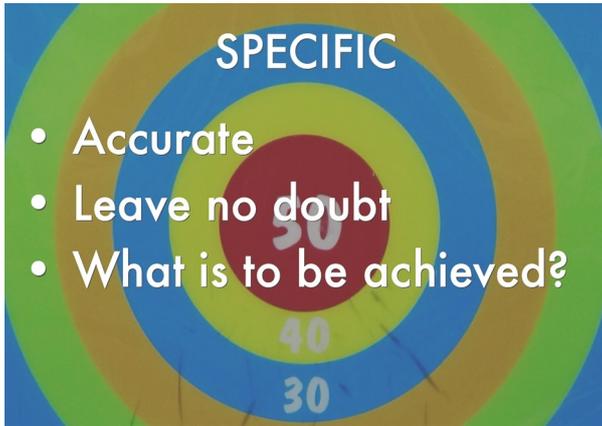
The acronym provides the basis for creating objectives for managing performance or developmental purposes.

There are many variations of words which could be used in SMART as an acronym. A list of several options is shown in the table at right:

S	Specific, Stimulating, Sincere, Simple, Stretching, Succinct, Straight-forward, Self-owned, Self-managed, Self-controlled, Significant, Strategic, Sensible
M	Measurable, Motivating, Manageable, Meaningful, Magical, Magnetic, Maintainable, Mapped-to-goals
A	Achievable, Assignable Appropriate, Audacious, Actionable, Attainable, Ambitious, Aspirational, Accepted-or-acceptable, Aligned, Accountable, Agreed, Adapted, As-if-now, Adjustable, Adaptable
R	Realistic, Relevant, Results Orientated, Resources are adequate, Resourced, Rewarding, Recorded, Reviewable, Robust, Relevant to a mission
T	Timely, Time-bound, Time-limited, Time-driven, Time-constrained, Time-constricted, Time-related, Time-phased, Time-sensitive, Time-specific, Time-stamped, Time-lined, Tangible, Trackable, Traceable, Timed, Timely, Toward what you want, Team-Building
E	Evaluate, Empowering, Extending, Exciting, Encompassing, Engaging, Energising, Ethical, Enjoyable
R	Review, Rewarding, Record, Realistic, Relevant, Resourced, Research Based

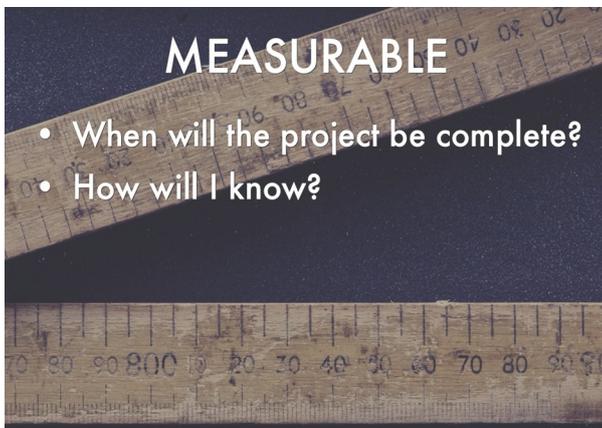
What words would best suit you in your role?

My preferred version of the SMARTER acronym which I use within my work is:



SPECIFIC

- Accurate
- Leave no doubt
- What is to be achieved?



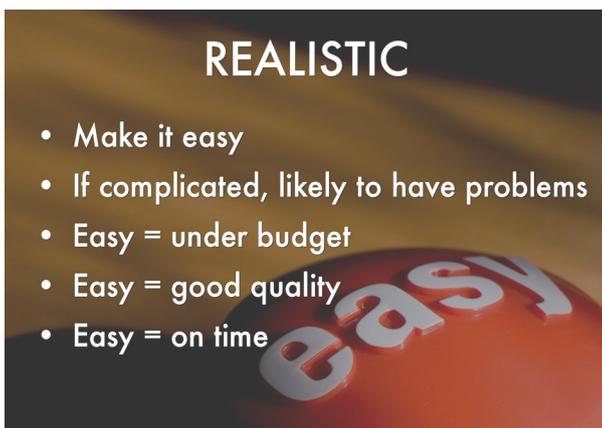
MEASURABLE

- When will the project be complete?
- How will I know?



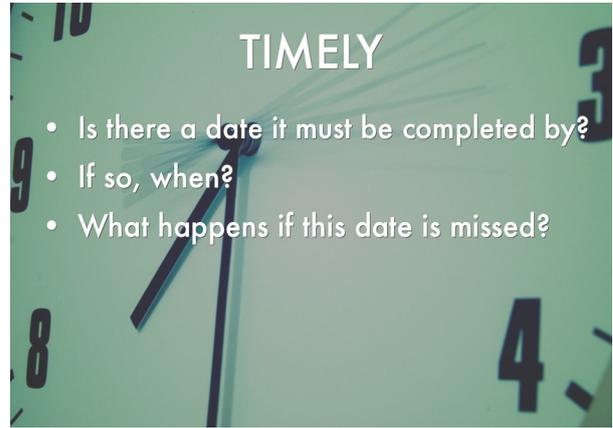
ACHIEVABLE

- Make the project as small as possible
- Easier to manage small projects
- Harder to manage large projects
- The smaller the elephant, the easier is it to eat



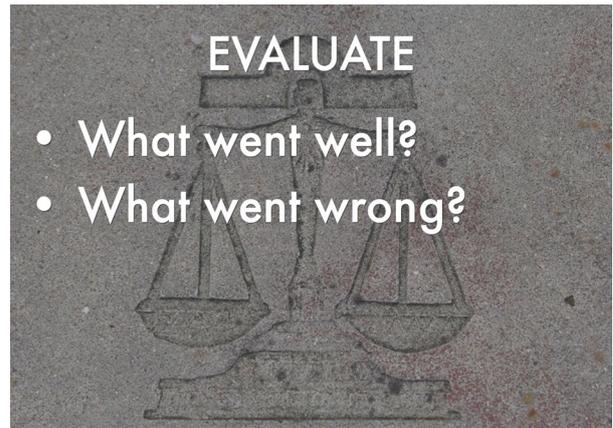
REALISTIC

- Make it easy
- If complicated, likely to have problems
- Easy = under budget
- Easy = good quality
- Easy = on time



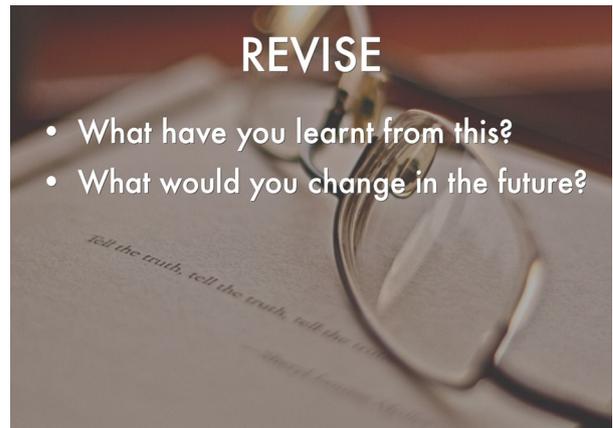
TIMELY

- Is there a date it must be completed by?
- If so, when?
- What happens if this date is missed?



EVALUATE

- What went well?
- What went wrong?



REVISE

- What have you learnt from this?
- What would you change in the future?

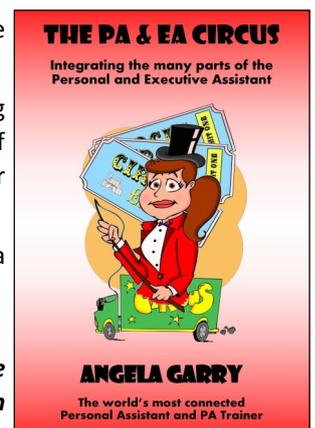
One of the key advantages in using SMARTER in the agreeing and setting of personal development goals, is that it helps to recognise the importance of the engagement of the individual. The more motivated they are by the development objective the better they appear to perform, often putting extra time into self-development activity.

Decide on your version of the SMARTER acronym.

Then decide how you are going to start using it as the basis of how you approach ALL of your work.

Work SMARTER, not harder. It's a no-brainer.

"The PA & EA Circus" is available from Amazon.com



Speaking with authority so people want to hear

Tandy Hanff, EDPA's resident 'guru', shares some advice on speaking with authority and making sure that you are heard.



This article could have two other titles: 'How to be heard' - or - 'How to speak so people will want to listen'.

Over the last ten years I have attended a lot of work-related events: conferences, workshops, trade shows, presentations, networking evenings and the like.

I've seen a lot of great speakers giving their all who have kept the room captivated throughout. I've seen some really enthusiastic speakers fall struggle to maintain the audience's interest. I've also seen some catastrophically dull speakers, who lost their audience before even opening their mouth.

Speakers can be really knowledgeable about their subject matter. They can have great slides and a fantastic message to put across. They can design fabulous handouts and point you in the direction of some really useful resources.

But if the ways in which they communicate don't draw—and, more importantly, hold onto—the attention of their audience... Well, you can see

that the talk isn't going to go well!

Now that I've scared you about how badly some speakers can speak, let's imagine a scenario where YOU have to give a talk in public, and look at some of the 'tricks of the trade' which will help you to speak confidently AND for your message to be heard, because the audience WANT to hear what you say.

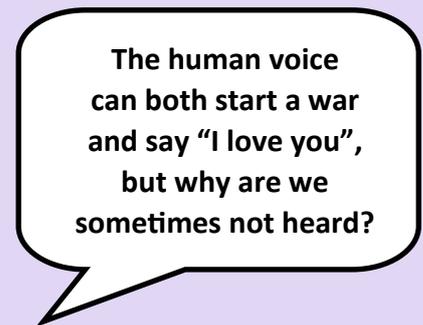
Here are the seven deadly sins that speakers often make:

- Gossiping - don't do this, it will turn around and be about you later.
- Judging their audience - it's hard to listen if you know you are being judged.
- Negativity - "oh isn't it dreadful?" / moan moan moan. This is hard to listen to.
- Complaining - this seems to be the UK national sport / art and becomes a viral misery.
- Excuses - if I seem to have a



blame thrower, it may come across that I don't take responsibility for my own actions.

- Exaggeration - if I exaggerate all the time, what do I call something that **really is** awesome?
- Confusing facts with opinions, dogmatism.



CORNERSTONES

There are four cornerstones to being heard and being more powerful and to making a change.

These are found by the acronym HAIL.

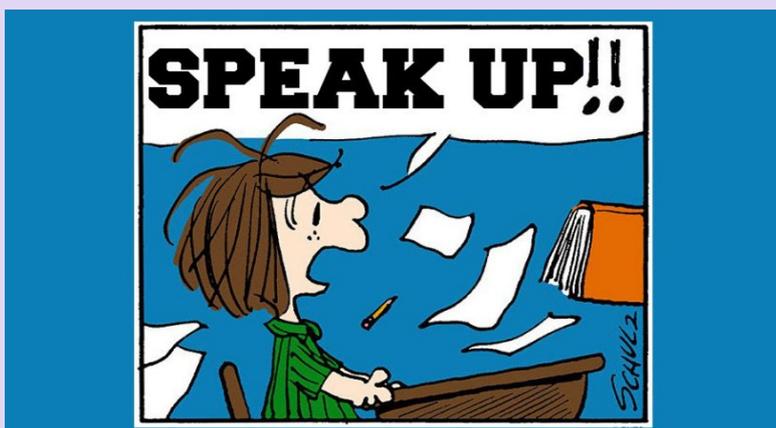
Make sure that you soak with:

- honesty,
- authenticity,
- integrity,
- love.

Each of these added together become something really powerful when speaking.

Using your voice

The sound you make is also very important when it comes to speaking in public. A child's voice is usually



higher pitched than an adult’s voice, for example—and you can usually tell when it’s a child on the phone, rather than their parent, phoning in with an excuse as to why they are not coming into school that day. We notice the sound of the voice, we notice how low or rich is sounds, and we notice the little squeaks and imperfections, the actual ways in which the person is speaking.

So when it comes to YOUR speech, you might want to consider recording yourself and listening back to it with a new ear. How do YOU sound?

Register: do not use falsetto. Notice where your voice comes from, does it come from your nose your throat or your chest? Aim for depth which indicates power and authority.

Timbre: great speakers have a smooth warm voice.

Prosody: singsong or metalanguage, changing your tone constantly, or using inflections in the wrong place. An example of this is the Bristol accent—which, while very melodic, repeatedly goes up at the end of every sentence. Speaking like this constantly in front of your audience can make it difficult for them to work out when you are asking them a question or when you are stating a fact.

Pace: speaking quickly and slowly to

emphasise, alternate your pace so that there is difference and movement.

Silence: silence can be incredibly powerful.

Pitch: how high or low is your voice? A deeper pitch adds meaning. Many is the time I have wanted to offer voice coaching lessons to high-pitched and squeaky receptionists when they answer my phone calls, to help them to sound more authoritative! Speaking in a high pitch can sound either far too young, inexperienced, terrified or in blind panic.

Volume: can indicate excitement when you're allowed or pay attention when whispering.

When to use these techniques?

When giving a talk, when making a proposal of marriage, when asking for a raise, when making a presentation.

Vocal warm ups before you go on:

1. Raise your arms and take a deep breath in, hold then "sigh" it out.
2. Bop bop bop - this moves your lips.
3. Brr brr brr like a telephone ringing.
4. La la la la will make you exercise your tongue .
5. Purring like a cat—including the French rolling of the ‘rrrrr’.
6. Make a noise like a police car’s

siren - nee naw nee naw - up and down.

Then there’s the room to consider:

The seven sins are bad enough, but add these to a room where there’s too much background noise going on, plus bad acoustics and an uncomfortable environment (cold, damp, smelly, bad seating, etc) could lead to people not listening as they have no desire to hear you , can’t wait to get out of the room, and they can't hear you anyway.

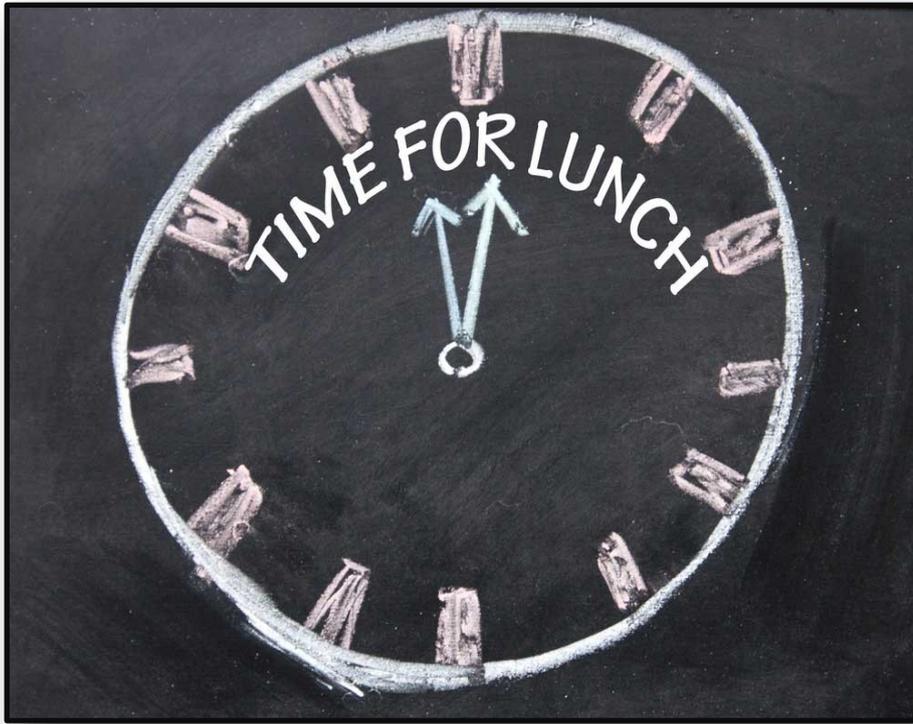
Your general aim:

You should be aiming to be causing an excitement among your audience, creating an atmosphere to tell your story, and designing interesting verbal descriptions to encourage them to imagine themselves in the story with you, all of which attracts and keeps their interest and leads to the audience actively receiving what you are saying.

Pause for a moment to think:

How much more effective would it be if you were able to speak powerfully in a designed soundscape to an individual or a group of people who were consciously listening?





It's Break-Time!!

Travelling round the world, I've met almost 5,000 PAs in my training work.

During every programme I ask for a show of hands as to how many attendees work their contracted hours. JUST their contracted hours. And there are usually only one or two hands in the air, out of groups of thirty or more PAs. When queried further, at least 75% are generally working 7 hours or more over and above their regular contracted hours each week.

I then ask how many take a lunch hour. As in a WHOLE hour. And again, there are usually only one or two hands in the air, if that. I further ask how many take a lunch break of any sort, AWAY from their desks – and do you know what? Once again, very few hands go up.

It seems that most PAs worldwide snatch a few minutes here or there at their desk to gobble down a sandwich or eat a crunch bar or

some sort, and very few actually make it outside their office, much less outside their building.

If this sounds at all familiar to you, please STOP doing this. It's bad for your health and well-being.

Make a point of getting up from your desk at lunchtime and go somewhere else – walk round the building, go to the staff room, walk to your car and back. Anything. Just get up and do SOMETHING other than sit at your desk.

But before you do this, let's look at the benefits of taking breaks in the first place. You may think that regularly detaching yourself from work is counterproductive, but it's totally the opposite.

A study made by the University of Illinois found that one's performance actually improves when the person takes breaks.

This is good news for a couple of reasons. First, when your focus improves, so does your

productivity. Since you have good concentration on your tasks, you'll most likely make better progress on them. Also, when you know that a scheduled break is ahead of you, it makes your work more pleasant (because you know that you don't have to spend your whole day on your computer).

There is another nice benefit of taking breaks and that's the problem-solving capabilities. Imagine working intensely to solve a problem but not making any progress. At some point you decide to have a break and walk away from your computer. Then, all of a sudden, the solution to your problem pops into your head while having a cup of coffee with your team members. So even if you leave your workspace, your brains still keep working on the solution, offering it to you when you least expect it.

For these reasons, breaks are important for your productivity. But what are the best ways to spend your break time? Consider these options:

- Make yourself a cup of coffee or tea
- Socialise with your colleagues or family members
- Meditate
- Take a nap (if you are working at home)
- Brief exercise (this depends of the length of the break you have)
- Eat a healthy snack
- Go outside and breathe some fresh air

These are just some of the ideas you can apply during your break. In general, try to have a break that energises you, helping you to perform better on your assignments after the break.

Peter DeWitt, a former school principal, gives his reasons why school secretaries and PAs deserve more credit.

A few months ago I had lunch with my former secretary Donna who is also a friend. The last three years I was a principal I won the lottery when it came to secretaries because I got to work with her. After our lunch, I thought about the many reasons why good school secretaries and PAs deserve more credit that they receive.

- **Working the front line** - Unlike anyone else in school, the main office is the first place visitors go to, which means that secretaries see parents at their best and their worst. Whether it's in person or on the phone, a school secretary has to listen to a parent or visitor when they may be most irate, and can help deescalate a situation. No, we don't always want them to do that because it might not be their job, but sometimes they take the opportunity to help when they can.
- **Students confide in them** - A great secretary, much like Donna, is a person who students loved to come and talk to when they were having a problem. Sometimes when students are sent down to the office and principals are otherwise engaged, secretaries are able to get the background story which help us make our best decisions.
- **They know the parents** - Many secretaries don't just know the students but they know the parents as well. Sometimes that's because they live in the same neighbourhood and other times it's because the parents were students once. Secretaries can help bridge the gap when principals and teachers are working through issues with parents.



A former Principal writes...

- **History of the district** - For new principals, talking with a veteran school secretary is worth its weight in gold because the secretary knows the ins and out of the district, all of which can help explain decision-making from the central office or the culture of the district.
 - **School climate** - Walking into the main office, and seeing how we are treated as guests, is the first aspect of whether a school climate is positive or negative. If the secretary merely is sitting and saying "can I help you?" as if they work at Motor Vehicle, we probably won't feel warm and fuzzy. However, when we walk in and the secretary is smiling, we see students working... and even better... smiling students with the secretary, we get a feeling that we have entered into a positive and inclusive school climate.
 - **Calm us down** - There are many times when secretaries calm tough situations and tell us not to email or call someone back so quickly.
 - **The Real Assistant Principal** - I was a principal in a small school district without an assistant. Donna was the assistant principal for all intents and purposes. She knew as much about the students, school and parents as I did, and knew what to do at times when I didn't. We worked as a team.
 - **They don't get paid enough** - Many secretaries work longer hours than they get paid for, can't escape school even when they're home, and don't get paid equivalent to the stress of their job. If you don't believe so, go visit a school on the first week of school at bus dismissal. That should open your eyes.
- I don't believe secretaries get the credit they deserve. In the end, a good school secretary helps build relationships, and is an integral part of the school climate.
- Peter DeWitt is a former school principal, and the author of several books including 'Collaborative Leadership: 6 Influences That Matter Most'.**



Photo: injury mid-air

where I met with a group of around 25 really enthusiastic, committed and engaged PAs who were part of an internal network within the University.

In the middle of September I then set off around the globe to deliver a two-day training programme for 28 PAs and Admins working in International School from across South Korea. My journey involved two flights — Birmingham to Dubai, then Dubai to Seoul, where I was due to arrive around tea-time, have a day (and two nights) to rest, and then deliver the training

Life being what it is, things didn't quite go to plan! On the first flight, around two hours before we were due to land in Dubai, I was asleep with my arm on the armrest of my aisle seat on the plane. At some point, my arm dropped downwards into the aisle—and a little while later I was abruptly awoken when a flight attendant went past, pushing a trolley at speed, and my arm was crushed between the trolley and the side of my seat, squashing my wrist in the process. One large bandage and an ice pack later, we landed in Dubai where I was assessed at the airport medical centre before being



EDPA Editor's Update

Angela Garry reports on her work as an author, book & editor, and PA trainer since the last issue of EDPA.

I could sit here and whinge and moan about how awful 2017 has been for me — the slow and painful aftermath of having collapsed so dramatically last Christmas with a pulmonary embolism, with many months away from work due to continued ill health.

Or I could sit here and write about my amazing luck and good fortune to have come through the pulmonary embolism and out the other side again. With my “positive thinking” head on, I firmly choose the latter.

I've never been comfortable with not doing anything — being “unbusy” has always been the worst thing for me as I love to be doing so many different things at once. I think that's what made me ideal for the Personal Assistant profession — the constant need for multi-tasking and switching from one role to another, juggling a number of tasks and responsibilities, and keeping track of everything. That's why, since leaving my full-time school PA role in February 2014 due to ill health, I have worked so hard at

not being JUST a trainer for PAs, but also an author of books, editor of this magazine, and a coach / mentor, as well as being a counsellor in spare time.

2017 has been a difficult time for me as I've had to cut back on all of these areas of working due to my health. Thankfully I'm on the way back up again now and I've been out and about on three pieces of training work since September, starting with a delivering a two-hour session at the Coventry University PAs' Away Day

Photo: with course attendees in South Korea —complete with cast!



sent on to my next flight to Seoul. Once in South Korea, I spent my 'rest day' at a fantastically well-organised new hospital in the city, where x-rays confirmed a fractured wrist. My arm was then put into a cast to see me through the rest of my trip and home back to the UK again.

By now, I hope you know that I am not one to give up, so you shouldn't be surprised to hear that I went ahead with the rest of my trip and delivered the training programme with my cast in a sling! The training course went well, thankfully, and the participants gave great feedback, regardless of my being incapacitated. I then returned to the UK where further x-rays were taken and my cast removed, to be replaced by a removable splint which I then wore for eight weeks.

With my wrist now healed, November saw me on a short-haul trip to Prague, where I delivered a Project Management workshop for around 30 PAs from all over Europe. The venue for the event was the NH Hotel which has two buildings—one at the foot of a hill, and the other at the top—joined by a cable car tramway. It made for very interesting viewing each morning on the way down to the main building for the conference, as the windows gave a 360 degree view over Prague.

I'm now on a 'rest period' until February, as far as training trips are concerned, then I will be off to Moscow to work with some more International School PAs from across Europe. After that, at the end of March I'll be on a



similar trip to Athens to work with PAs there.

In between times, I've been working on books, including editing Christina Maslova's excellent book for PAs who want to work in Russia. The Russian version of her book was published there in September, and Christina approached me in early November to ask if I would help her publish an English translation. The finalised book went live in early December, and is now available worldwide via Amazon.

Earlier in 2017 I started working with Annette Moss, a spiritual medium. Together we are creating a series of 15 books on spirituality, plus course books and journals for those interested in their

Photo: Christina Maslova's book for PAs in Russia, edited by AG

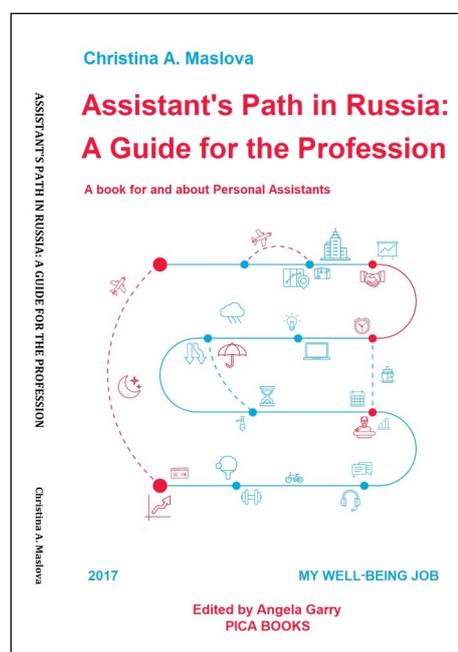


Photo: spiritual development books by Annette Moss, edited by AG

own spiritual development — 7 journals plus the first of the 15 volumes went live before Christmas.

I'm also currently working with Debra Jarrett, a fellow psychotherapist, on her book on Dissociation, which is almost ready for the final edit stage and then publication. We've been working on this book for two years now and it is a fascinating book for dissociative people, their friends and families, and psychotherapists.

From my own writing desk, I'm close to finishing the biography of the author Helene Hanff plus two books on her travels. Alongside this, I'm compiling a book for survivors of pulmonary embolisms and blood clots—based on my own experiences and those of around 30 others. It's the type of book that I wish I'd been able to read when I was taken ill—but which wasn't available—a book by people who had experienced it, who knew what it was like, with advice on how you might get through it. Plus I'm also working on a book on stress-busting in the workplace, a guide book for handling long-term illness, and several children's books. Like I said earlier, I'm a chronic multi-tasker!

Have a great new year and new term in your school. Stay fabulous,—you're incredibly important in your school!

Onwards and upwards!

