



Get a Backbone, Principal!

Five Conversations Every School Leader
Must Have Right Now

Pennsylvania Principals Association Conference | October 31, 2016

Get a **BACK BONE,** Principal:

5 Conversations Every
School Leader Must
Have Right Now!
by Jill Jackson

*"Excellent principals
who get positive
results have skills,
but more
importantly, they
have a backbone!
And they use it."*

Our *Backbone* Work Today!

- ☒ A Backbone is Born
- ☒ You, Yourself and You
- ☒ The Instructional Coach
- ☒ The Teaching Staff
- ☒ The Teaching Teams
- ☒ The Most Resistant Teacher



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Backbone Pre-Test

- What is your school's #1 instructional goal for this school year?
- What is the district's #1 instructional goal for this school year?
- What actions will your staff take in reaching those goals?
- How will they know they are on track in reaching those goals?



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**It's not about the HOW
until you know the WHAT!**

Two Main Reasons Schools Fail

1. They have no clear plan
2. They focus on the wrong stuff

Truth #1

All of your work as a leader should rally around these four things:

1. Classroom management
2. Student engagement
3. Lesson preparation and planning
4. Instructional delivery

Uncontrollables v. Controllables

Uncontrollable

- Parents
- Prior schooling
- Attendance
- Reading logs
- Home libraries
- Aide time
- Class sizes
- Funding
- Curriculum
- The Good Ol' Days

Controllable

- Planning
- Preparation
- Management
- Student engagement
- Quality delivery
- Monitoring
- Feedback
- Explicitness
- Fun Factor
- Moving beyond fidelity

Truth #2

Quality instruction is your highest priority.
Period.



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Truth #3

You have to cultivate and strengthen your
backbone to do the work of perfecting
quality instruction.



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Truth #4

Paring down your instructional focus is
essential. And it's really hard to do!



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Truth #5

Just because you have 10,000 focus areas
doesn't mean you're doing 10,000 things
well.



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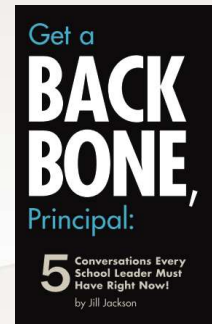
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First, We Must Clear the Debris

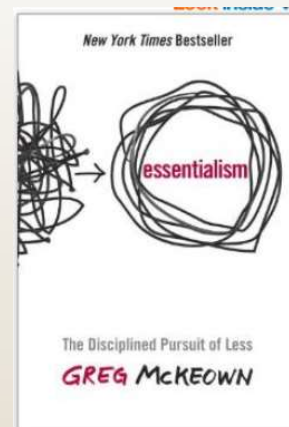


Conversation 1

You,
Yourself and
You



Waiting to build consensus and “buy-in”
are the bane of your leadership
existence!



Less, But Better

"Essentialism is not about how to get more things done; it's about how to get the *right* things done. It doesn't mean just doing less for the sake of less either.

It is about making the wisest possible investment of your time and energy in order to operate at our highest point of contribution by doing only what is essential."

Greg McKeown



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The Essentials: "Less, But Better"

- What are you willing to "go big" on?
- What will you have to do to "go big" on that thing?
- What good ideas will you have to leave behind?

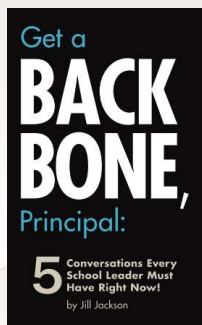


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Conversation 2

The Instructional Coach



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The Coach's Role

...to carry out the principal's instructional focus.

To be the quality control agent!



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Setting up a Coaching Practice

- Coaching is not a concept...it is a thing
- Everyone gets coaching
- Coaching is tailored to the teacher's need
- Principal and coach meet weekly to touch base
- Coaching has a form
- Debriefing is required
- The coach keeps a calendar and log of coaching work
- Coaching is focused on the four areas:
 1. Classroom management
 2. Student engagement
 3. Lesson preparation and planning
 4. Instructional delivery



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Here's What It Should Look Like

Principal's Instructional Focus

Coach goes out and coaches the staff on the instructional focus

This leads to mastery of this

Principal's Instructional Focus



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Planning Your Coach Convo

1. What is the current state of your coaching program?
2. When you think honestly about your past setup for coaching, did you set high expectations for 100 percent participation or were there holes?
3. What kind of information do you need from the coach in order to measure progress and success?
4. How will you prioritize the coaching from this point on?
5. Are there specific teachers who are resisting working with the coach?
6. What are the three main points you need to make to the staff about the re-focusing of the coaching role?

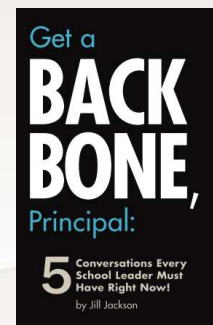


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Conversation 3

The Teaching Staff



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Anatomy of the Staff Convo

1. Call out behaviors and describe in detail
2. Results of behaviors/actions using data, if at all possible
3. Resolution and action
4. Timeline and responsibility
5. Pep talk and enthusiasm check

Watch out!

- Side deals
- Too many cooks in the kitchen
- Making assumptions
- Broad examples
- Soft-selling at the end

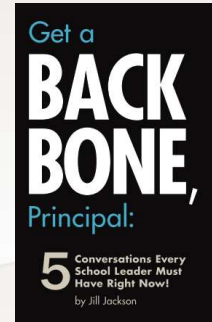


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Conversation 4

The Teaching Teams



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Team Agendas

Agenda items should be **linked to actions** that will help you accomplish or master your instructional focus.

Without **action linked to agenda items**, we're just talking about things!

If you are not pleased with the behaviors you see or the productivity levels in the team meetings, you have to clearly explain what **behaviors/actions you want stopped and what you expect them to replace them with.**



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Principal Team Meeting Reflection

1. What instructional goal do I want the teachers to focus on as they review the data? What questions will I provide them so they get to the heart of the data?
2. What trends in the data have I noticed that I want them to pay particular attention to?
3. How will I know that they have analyzed the data? What is the "product" I want to see?
4. What are sample next steps I could provide to support them in determining the actions that they'll take?
5. How long do I imagine this analysis of the data will take?
6. If they feel like they're "done early," how can I help them shape a secondary task?

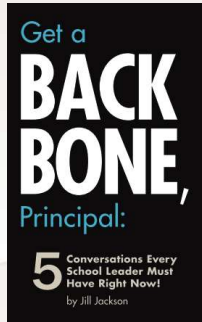


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Conversation 5

The Most Resistant Teacher



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The #1 way that you honor those folks doing the “right” thing is by taking care of the people who aren’t.

Assertive Conversation Steps

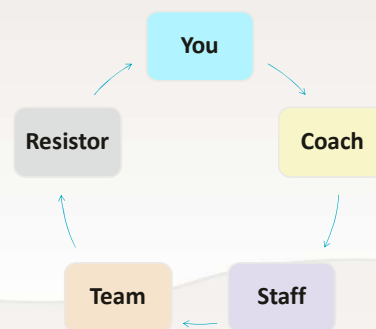
- ✱ Behavior to be eliminated
- ✱ Explicit description of the behavior
- ✱ Principal’s feelings about the behavior
- ✱ Explanation of how the behavior impacts the teacher
- ✱ Principal’s personal contribution to the continuance of the behavior
- ✱ Principal’s desire to resolve the issue
- ✱ Principal’s invitation to the teacher to respond



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The Backbone Plan



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Get teaching hacks, time-savers, shortcuts, video links, free resources and all kinds of things I don't post on my blog or anywhere else. Oh yeah...it's free!

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