

WHAT WORKS - A PKAL RESOURCE

SOME WORDS OF WISDOM FOR STEM LEADERS

- ◆ Make time for what matters. Understand career stages. Aim high. Learn to say no. Find the right balance. Enjoy what you do. Know the rules.¹
- ◆ It's up to you to carve out your place in the work world and know when to change course...we will have to learn to manage ourselves. We will have to learn to develop ourselves. We will have to place ourselves where we can make the greatest contribution.²
- ◆ Planning is important, but a plan without a well-defined goal is virtually useless. Sometimes goals are not as obvious as one might think. An important part of the process is to take some time to consider all possible options.... Determining the final destination is essential to begin contriving a plan that hits the mark.³
- ◆ Alice: *Would you tell me, please, which way I ought to go from here?*
Cheshire Cat: *That depends a good deal on where you want to get to.*⁴
- ◆ A strategy is a plan to reach a goal cleverly. While it is sometimes possible to reach goals in a muddling and fatalistic way, there are advantages in thinking strategically, in using forethought, and in combining tactics as skillfully as possible... strategic planning is creative problem-solving oriented toward change.⁵
- ◆ Like it or not, we must go along from instant to instant, deciding for ourselves. At each moment it is necessary to make up our minds what we are going to do next... every life is obliged, willy-nilly, to justify itself in its own eyes.⁶
- ◆ Through reflection comes creativity. This ability to invent, devise, envisage, and improvise is the key to success in all types of scholarly work.⁷
- ◆ [A] widely observed trait [of the creative person] may be labeled flexibility. It is perhaps best seen in what has been called the playfulness of the man of originality....⁸
- ◆ Leadership is both active and reflective. One has to alternate between participating and observing. Walt Whitman described it as being "both in and out of the game." Although the principle may be easy to grasp, the practice is not.⁹
- ◆ Passion for your purpose comes when you are highly motivated by your work because you believe in its intrinsic worth, and you can use your abilities to maximum effect.¹⁰

The importance of reflection is one of the threads through these *Words of Wisdom for STEM Leaders*. From a wide range of reflective leaders, they offer perspectives on the personal dimension of leadership— both reflection and action. Thinking about how leaders can learn to manage themselves and stay sane in the process, Ronald Heifetz emphasizes the importance of reflection, using the metaphor of learning to dance:

Rather than maintain perspective on the events that surround and involve us, we often get swept up by them. Consider the experience of dancing on a dance floor in contrast with standing on a balcony and watching other people dance.

Engaged in the dance, it is nearly impossible to get a sense of the patterns made by everyone on the floor. To discern the larger patterns on the dance floor— to see who is dancing with whom, in what groups, in what location, and who is sitting out which kind of dance— we have to stop moving and get to the balcony.

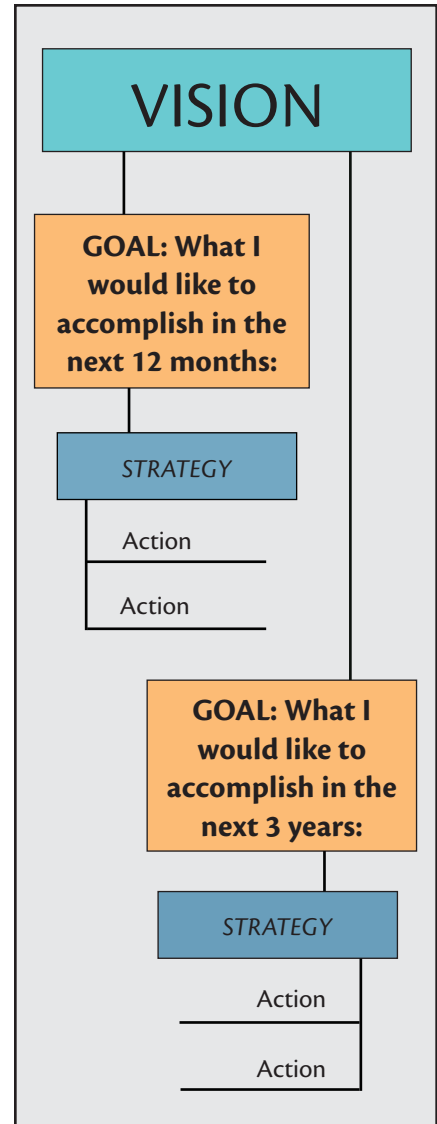
— Ronald Heifetz, *Leadership without Easy Answers*. The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1994.



SOME WORDS OF WISDOM FOR STEM LEADERS

- ♦ By definition, experts have developed particular ways to think and reason effectively. Understanding expertise is important because it provides insights into the nature of thinking and problem-solving. It is not simply general abilities, such as memory or intelligence, nor the use of general strategies that differentiate experts from novices... experts have acquired extensive knowledge that affects what they notice and how they organize, represent, and interpret information in their environment. This, in turn, affects their abilities to remember, reason, and solve problems.¹¹
- ♦ *No matter where you ride, that's where you are.*
Timing has a lot to do with the outcome of the rain dance.
There is a lot more to riding a horse than just sitting in the saddle and letting your feet hang down.
If you find yourself in a hole, the first thing to do is stop digging.
*Never miss a good chance to shut up.*¹² ■

- ¹ Narum, Jeanne L., *Interviews with NSF Distinguished Teaching Scholars*. Project Kaleidoscope, 2005. <<http://www.pkal.org/collections/DTSInterviews.cfm>>
- ² Drucker, Peter F., *Managing Oneself*. *Harvard Business Review*, Jan 1, 2005.
- ³ Reeve, John R., Smith, Marion B., *Planning for Master Planning*. APPA, 1995.
- ⁴ Carroll, Lewis, *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*. MacMillan & Co., 1865.
- ⁵ Adams, James L., *The Care and Feeding of Ideas: A Guide to Encouraging Creativity*. Addison-Wesley Publishing Company, Inc., 1986.
- ⁶ Ortega y Gasset, José, *Mission of the University*. W.W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1944.
- ⁷ Glassick, Charles E., Mary Taylor Huber & Gene I. Maeroff, *Scholarship Assessed: Evaluation of the Professoriate*. Jossey-Bass Inc., 1997.
- ⁸ Gardner, John W. *Self-Renewal*. Harper & Row, 1964
- ⁹ Heifetz, Ronald A., *Leadership Without Easy Answers*. The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1994.
- ¹⁰ George, Bill, *Authentic Leadership: Rediscovering the Secrets to Creating Lasting Value*. Jossey-Bass, 2003.
- ¹¹ National Research Council, *How People Learn*. National Academy Press, 1999.
- ¹² Bender, Texas Bix, *Don't Squat With Yer Spurs On! A Cowboy's Guide to Life*. Gibbs Smith, 1992.



These words of wisdom can catalyze one's reflections and also suggest what might be done upon returning to the dance floor. The iterative process of reflection and action is built into PKAL's DNA; thus PKAL's template for planning is also presented.