

Leading in Disruptive Times



THE MAIN IDEA's One-Pagers to Help School Leaders Ride The C's of Change

1st C's – Calm and Comfort

You have a choice. As a school leader, you can resist the current wave of unprecedented change or you can make the most of it by riding that wave with the C's of change.

Today's one-pager focuses on the first C's: **calm and comfort**.

Your first priority is to be a voice of calm and comfort.

Global leader Thich Nhat Hanh writes about the Vietnamese boat people navigating rough seas. The boats could sink if people panicked:

"But if even one person aboard can remain calm, lucid, knowing what to do and what not to do, he or she can help the boat survive. His or her expression — face, voice — communicates clarity and calmness, and people have trust in that person...

One such person can save the lives of many."

What are some ways you, as a school leader, can bring *calm and comfort*?

First, put on your own mask.

Meet your own basic needs. Are you ensuring you get enough sleep, food, and exercise? If you ignore your own basic needs you won't be able to support the school community.

Build your own resiliency. Below are a few ideas:

- Find a person to share your thoughts and concerns with (a family member, a colleague).
- Consider Journaling — One idea for a prompt: "Who do you want to be during this crisis?" "How do you want to be?"
- Develop in-the-moment tools for when you feel unsettled. Try *deep breathing* and *short meditation*.
- For more, I love these books and I have summaries (click titles): [*The Mindful School Leader*](#) and [*Onward*](#).

Serve as a role model of resiliency. Go public with your strategies. Share with the school community that you are journaling, shutting off the news long before bed, calling your friends, etc. This will not only humanize you, but it might inspire others to try some of these tools to build their own resiliency.

Next, provide comfort and calm for your school community.

Allow for some slack. Don't be all business-like. Right now is the time to focus on *people* not *progress*.

Project normalcy. Share images of normalcy. If you are cooking or spending time with your own family, share photos (Twitter, email, etc.) or do a live feed on Facebook of you doing normal everyday things.

Communicate. Provide regular communication with the entire school community. If you usually send communication weekly, consider doing it every morning now. Keep it short, informative, and honest. I will do a one-pager on this **C** soon.

Listen. Although you may be *sending* information, are you also *listening* to hear concerns? Maybe you think everyone's top priority is tech, but really people are feeling isolated. Even if you can't do synchronous listening, set up a Google Form as a survey or create an ongoing Google Doc to collect concerns. For more tips, I love [*The Listening Leader*](#).

Face-to-face opportunities. People may feel isolated. Ask staff to conduct *some* online lessons simultaneously. Homeroom teachers could do some 10-minute check-ins. Create online "office hours" for staff to chat individually with you or create a "Q & A" time open to all.