

Friday, August 31, 2007

Short Article

Rabbit's Foot Leadership

"Rabbit's Foot leadership" is about the only type of leadership that is available to executives and managers of our public schools. Why "Rabbit's Foot?"

As the joke goes, "How can the foot be lucky? Look what it did for the rabbit."

The metaphor of the rabbit stems from the era of Aesop. In the fables by the same name, the rabbit was portrayed as a timid creature, with a level of courage lower than any other animal, except for the frog.

In the same way, bureaucratic leaders exhibit a scarcity of courage on the "courage level dipstick." The only group that registers lower on the "courage-o-meter" are television network executives who prefer to air salacious and lurid (as close to the smut surface as they can get without a Federal Communications Commission (FCC) fine, instead of educational and uplifting programming. Sidebar You do support your local educational television station and Public Radio, don't you? Characteristics of the "Rabbit Foot & Leader The key to understanding the Rabbit's Foot leader is to understand survival by dodging, survival by running in circles to avoid predatory issues.

Rabbit's Foot Leadership is being nimble on one's feet, hopping just out of reach of danger; not venturing too far out of the bureaucratic comfort zone lest another danger lurks.

This is called "Leadership by the Quick Step,"; (some would call it the "Shuffle"); i.e., dancing just out of the reach of danger, but skirting "new dangers" by taking an indefinite stand & "Spin your Partner, Twist Again!" Safety in the Rabbit Hole When the hound-pack of accountability, track-record, and transparency begins closing in, institutional survival tactics must be employed (no pun intended). These survival tactics mean ducking into the rabbit hole. Sidebar The bureaucratic "Prime Directive" differs from the personal "Prime Directive" in this way. The personal prime directive is to "protect your job at all cost." The institutional "Prime Directive" is to "protect your boss' job at all costs, even at the cost of your own & neck, hide, skin.

Captains go down with the ship, but "Good Soldiers" take a bullet for their "big chief." Descriptions for what might happen to the "protect-at-all-costs" job if "ducking into the rabbit hole isn't effective include seeing the job go & Up in Smoke Down in Flames

Out the Door

Off the Charts

On the Rocks

Into the Fire

Against the Ropes

From Heaven to xxx The trick is to "set the hounds on someone else's track, and let an underling take the & Rap

Fall

Flack

Fallout

Tail-Kicking

Whipping In the "almost words" of an immortal commercial, "The underlings take the licking, so the boss goes on ticking." Borrowing Another Icon And there is no copyright infringement in drumming up the image of another rabbit-related drum-thumping icon, but the idea of just drumming along in a mindless fashion is enough to energize any Rabbit's Foot school leader. Sidebar This is parody, and the Supreme Court sanctions our right to borrow. Another Rabbit's Foot Leadership skill is in "Beating one's own Drum."

"Tooting one's own Horn" is necessary, even if the band bus wallows in the swamp after deferring to "executive guidance."

No matter how many "sour notes" are played by this "fan club solo," "the show must go on," and the "Spin" must be doctored. Rabbit's Foot Leadership to the rescue. Talk fast, think on your feet, grasp for any passing flotsam to keep afloat & other hallmarks of Rabbit's Foot leadership.

Of course, some folks will decry this state of affairs &

But, no, we're not going there because this is an article about school leaders, not politicians and elected officials & although there is some infidelity to the cause of educating our children.

That proclivity of rabbits (and some politicians) isn't the focus of this article. How does Anything at All Get Done? Noticing that Rabbit's Foot Leaders such as the ones described in this article abound in the school district habitat, one might worry & and assume & and lament that "nothing of value will ever get done in our schools."

This would be true except: Students learn in spite of administrative bungling and issue sidestepping

Teachers learn to "fly under the radar" and avoid detection for employing sound instructional strategies amidst the wail of administrative directives

Teachers and students are so incredibly creative and inventive that they can make the most of a bad learning

environmentSo, it is the "on the dodge" pattern of the Rabbit's Foot Leader in our school district bureaucracy that enables any teaching at all in the classroom environment.

Of course, this brings to mind the mixed metaphor of another group of critters, each personifying this trait of Rabbit's Foot Leadership.

Not sure which one we mean? Well, it isn't menagerie in Henny Penny's barnyard.

Give up?

Here's a clue…

Picture four monkeys, three with hands strategically placed to signify traits of the Rabbit's Foot Leader.

And the fourth monkey. Come on, you know. It's on your back!

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