



# GOSSIP BE GONE!

## STRATEGIES FOR BUILDING POSITIVE STRENGTHS- BASED TEAMS

*Workbook*

PRESENTED BY: SUSAN MACDONALD

Inspiring New Perspectives

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# welcome

*Each day you lead by example. Whether you realize it or not or whether it's positive or negative, you are influencing those around you. - Rob Liano*

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## Welcome to **Gossip Be Gone! Strategies for Building Positive Strengths-Based Teams**

Children thrive in environments where the adults model positive relationships and create communities based on trust and respect.

In this exciting webinar, presented by early childhood leadership expert, Susan MacDonald, will explore strategies for eliminating gossip and enhancing your professional communication skills with coworkers, parents, and administrators. Susan will also expand your knowledge of Appreciative Inquiry strategies and positive psychology.

Susan will help you explore strengths-based communication strategies through small-group exercises, using the NAEYC Code of Ethical Conduct as a guide. You will leave with a clear path to creating resilient relationships and a positive, supportive, respectful environment for children and adults.

This reflection guide contains a variety of tools, questions, resources, and assessments to help strengthen the work of teams.

Be intentional about finding time to complete the reflective exercises. The energy and focus that you put into these exercises will directly impact your outcomes.



# About Susan

**Susan MacDonald** is the founder of Inspiring New Perspectives, a consultancy focused on empowering educational leaders to create programs that deeply respect and nurture the possibilities that lie within each child, parent, and teacher. She has been developing and delivering inspirational courses and workshops for more than 25 years. Her background includes director of a Reggio-inspired preschool program, adjunct faculty at Lesley University and Wheelock College, and Commonwealth of Massachusetts licensing supervisor. She holds a master's degree in instructional design and several professional coach certifications. Susan is the past president of the Boston Area Reggio Inspired Network and past vice president of the Massachusetts Association for the Education of Young Children.

Susan is the author of two books, *Inspiring Early Childhood Leadership: Eight Strategies to Ignite Passion and Transform Program Quality*, and *Inspiring Professional Growth: Empowering Strategies to Lead, Motivate and Engage Early Childhood Teachers*.

Let's  
Connect

Website: [www.inspiringnewperspectives.com](http://www.inspiringnewperspectives.com)

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# **BRAVING – BRENÉ BROWN'S SEVEN ELEMENTS OF TRUST**

## **BOUNDARIES:**

You respect my boundaries, and when you're not clear about what's okay and not okay, you ask. You're willing to say no.

## **RELIABILITY:**

You do what you say you'll do. At work, this means staying aware of your competencies and limitations so you don't overpromise and are able to deliver on commitments and balance competing priorities.

## **ACCOUNTABILITY:**

You own your mistakes, apologize, and make amends.

## **VAULT:**

You don't share information or experiences that are not yours to share. I need to know that my confidences are kept, *and* that you're not sharing with me any information about other people that should be confidential.

## **INTEGRITY:**

You choose courage over comfort. You choose what is right over what is fun, fast, or easy. And you choose to practice your values rather than simply professing them.

## **NONJUDGMENT:**

I can ask for what I need, and you can ask for what you what you need. We can talk about how we feel without judgment. We can ask each other for help without judgment.

## **GENEROSITY:**

You extend the most generous interpretation possible to the intentions, words, and actions of others.

*From: Brown, Brené. Atlas of the Heart: Mapping Meaningful Connection and the Language of Human Experience. New York: Random House. 2021*

# **BRAVING – BRENÉ BROWN'S SEVEN ELEMENTS OF TRUST**

## *Self-Trust Reflection*

**B** - Did I respect my own boundaries? Was I clear about what's okay and what's not okay?

**R** - Was I reliable? Did I do what I said I was going to do?

**A** - Did I hold myself accountable?

**V** - Did I respect the vault and share appropriately?

**I** - Did I act from my integrity?

**N** - Did I ask for what I needed? Was I nonjudgmental about needing help?

**G** - Was I generous toward myself?

*From: Brown, Brené. Atlas of the Heart: Mapping Meaningful Connection and the Language of Human Experience. New York: Random House. 2021*

# KEY QUESTIONS TO BUILD RELATIONSHIPS AND DISCOVER INDIVIDUAL STRENGTHS:

*Too often we underestimate the power of a touch, a smile, a kind word, a listening ear, an honest compliment, or the smallest act of caring, all of which have the potential to turn a life around. - Leo Buscaglia*

- What are your greatest strengths, and how are you using them in your classroom?
- What brings you joy and a sense of satisfaction in your daily work?
- What is one story from your classroom that captures what you are most proud of as an early childhood educator?
- What gets you truly excited about your professional work?
- What motivates you to do your very best?
- If you were to be given an award for your teaching, what would it be for? What specific skills helped you to win this award? Who do you think would have nominated you: parents? Co-teachers? Supervisor? Community organization?
- What do your colleagues typically ask you for help with? What skills or talents do you feel you share with your colleagues on a regular basis?
- Share one of your best experiences in the classroom this past year.
- Over the last six months, when have you felt most alive and electrified by your work? What made this experience so exciting for you?
- What is your perfect workday, from the moment you arrive until you leave at the end of the day? Share as many details as you can.
- What is something you accomplished in the past that you're proud of?
- What do parents and your colleagues compliment you on?
- What is one of the most important lessons you have learned in your role as an early childhood educator? How do you apply this lesson to your daily work?
- How do you effectively share your gifts and talents with the children, teachers, and families?
- What has been a major learning, insight, or discovery for you this year?

*Adapted from: MacDonald, Susan. Inspiring Professional Growth: Lewisville, NC: Gryphon House, 2019. Pages 42 - 45*

# INVITING POSSIBILITIES FOR TEAMS

*Positive communicators also spread positive gossip.  
Instead of sharing negative gossip, be the kind of communicator  
who spreads positive news about other people. – Jon Gordon*

## QUESTIONS THAT INVITE POSSIBILITY:

- What are the best things that could happen in our classroom in the near future?
- What changes would we like to experiment with in our teaching?
- What do you think are the best possible outcomes for our work together?
- What do we believe is possible?
- How might our teaching be different in a few months?
- What could we pay more attention to in the classroom?
- What variables do you think matter most?
- What possibilities do you see for the teaching team in the next few months?
- What changes do you think your students would really appreciate?
- What commitments have you made to the team?
- What things can we imagine doing differently?
- What would we like to see more of in your classroom?
- How could our needs and the needs of your students be more fully met?
- What kind of environment would we like to create for your students?
- What changes would excite us and make us feel great?
- What has worked for us in other settings that we can draw on in this situation?
- What are the best things that could happen in our classroom in the near future?
- What changes would we like to experiment with in our teaching?
- What do you think are the best possible outcomes for our work together?
- How do you effectively share your gifts and talents with the children, teachers, and families?
- What has been a major learning, insight, or discovery for you this year?

*Adapted from Evocative Coaching: Transforming Schools One Conversation at a Time. By Tschannen-Moran, Bob, and Megan Tschannen-Moran. 2010. pages 159 – 160*

# QUESTIONS FOR TEAMS TO REFRAME DIFFICULT SITUATIONS

*A culture of greatness doesn't happen by accident. It happens when a leader expects greatness, and each person in the organization builds it, lives it, values it, reinforces it, and fights for it. - Jon Gordon*

1. In what ways will our work together be better after having worked through this?

2. What are the strengths of this situation, and what is good about it?

3. What do we stand to learn or gain from this?

4. Who do we know who deals well with these types of situations, and what can we learn from him or her? What questions do we want to ask this person?

*Adapted from: The Joy of Appreciative Living by Jacqueline Kelm*



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5. When was a time in the past when we dealt successfully with a similar situation, and what can we apply from that?

6. What are our greatest strengths, and how can we use them to help us in this situation?

7. What are two good things that could possibly come out of this?

8. How will the learning from this situation spill over into other areas of our work?

*Adapted from: The Joy of Appreciative Living by Jacqueline Kelm*

# TEAM DISCUSSION PLANNING FORM

*Name*

Professional challenge (with a colleague, classroom dynamic, child, parent..)

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Key goal(s) for team discussion:

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Key questions to gain a broader perspective on the challenge:

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Key questions to define the issue(s) that needs to be addressed:

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Key questions to define action steps:

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Plan for follow-up:

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*Prepared by: Susan MacDonald, Inspiring New Perspectives, [www.inspiringnewperspectives.com](http://www.inspiringnewperspectives.com)*

# ASSESSING YOUR WORK AS A TEAM

**DIRECTIONS:** Circle the number that best reflects how true each of the stated descriptions is for your team

	STRONGLY DISAGREE			STRONGLY AGREE	
1. We engage in open and honest communication.	1	2	3	4	5
2. Everyone has a chance to participate in decision making	1	2	3	4	5
3. We all feel comfortable expressing our thoughts and ideas during team meetings.	1	2	3	4	5
4. We listen actively to one another and try not to interrupt.	1	2	3	4	5
5. We cooperate to get things done.	1	2	3	4	5
6. We all follow through on the commitments we make.	1	2	3	4	5
7. We continually clarify everyone's team responsibilities.	1	2	3	4	5
8. Conflicts are dealt with constructively, respecting differing points of view.	1	2	3	4	5
9. We seek and give feedback to each other.	1	2	3	4	5
10. We regularly reflect on and evaluate the progress we are making towards achieving our goals for children and families.	1	2	3	4	5

Source: Adapted from *Leading Adult Learning: Supporting Adult Development in Our Schools* by Eleanor DragoSeverson. p. 98

# RESOURCES

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- Coyle, Daniel. *The Culture Code: The Secrets of Highly Successful Groups*. Bantam Books, 2018.
- Crisalli, Linda. "Understanding and Managing 'The Generations'" *Exchange*, 2018, pp. 8–11. <https://www.childcareexchange.com/catalog/magazine/>
- Drago-Severson, Eleanor, and Jessica Blum-DeStefano. *Tell Me so I Can Hear You: A Developmental Approach to Feedback for Educators*. Harvard Education Press, 2017.
- Kelm, Jacqueline. *The Joy of Appreciative Living: Your 28 Day Plan to Greater Happiness Using the Principles of Appreciative Inquiry*. Mooresville, NC: Venet Publishing, 2014
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- MacDonald, Susan. *Inspiring Professional Growth: Empowering Strategies to Lead, Motivate, and Engage Early Childhood Teachers*. Lewisville, NC: Gryphon House, 2019.
- NAEYC - Code of Ethical Conduct [https://www.naeyc.org/sites/default/files/globally-shared/downloads/PDFs/resources/position-statements/Ethics%20Position%20Statement2011\\_09202013update.pdf](https://www.naeyc.org/sites/default/files/globally-shared/downloads/PDFs/resources/position-statements/Ethics%20Position%20Statement2011_09202013update.pdf)
- Playful inquiry -- try this anywhere: Robyn Stratton-Berkessel at TEDxNavesink <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9IDMOgHINak>
- Stavros, Jackie and Cheri Torres. *Conversations Worth Having: Using Appreciative Inquiry to Fuel Productive and Meaningful Engagement*. Oakland: CA. Berrett-Koehler Publishers, Inc. 2018.
- Tschannen-Moran, Bob, and Megan Tschannen-Moran. *Evocative Coaching: Transforming Schools One Conversation at a Time*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2010.
- Whitney, Diana, Trosten-Bloom, Amanda and Rader, Kae. *Appreciative Leadership: Focusing on What Works to Drive Winning Performance and Build Thriving Organizations*. New York: McGraw-Hill, 2010.

*Created by Susan MacDonald, Inspiring New Perspectives - [www.inspringnewperspectives.com](http://www.inspringnewperspectives.com)*

# Join Susan

## INSPIRING PROFESSIONAL GROWTH FOR LEADERS OF EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAMS 2023 – 2024 An Eight Month Learning Community

[CLICK HERE FOR COURSE DETAILS & REGISTRATION](#)

Are you ready to re-ignite your passion, thrive as a leader, and discover new and empowering ways to sustain and recruit an engaged workforce?

It's time to reduce the feelings of isolation and stress so that you can reconnect with your hopes and dreams and establish a more professional and positive work culture.

This course begins on, **September 26, 2023 and ends on April 23, 2024.** Each monthly session will be presented live on Zoom, recordings of each session will be posted to the course site. The live course presentations will be held on Tuesdays from 1:00 – 2:30 pm EST.

This program includes:

- **8 Live Interactive Professional Development Sessions** to help you embrace a growth mindset, develop a vision-focused action plan, utilize strength-based communication and strategies for making transformational changes.
- **8 In-Depth Reflection and Resource Guides** to enhance your learning and build your leadership portfolio.
- **Access to a Private Discussion Board** - where you will build strong connections, collaborate, and learn in an interactive forum.
- **A 24 Hour Professional Development Certificate**

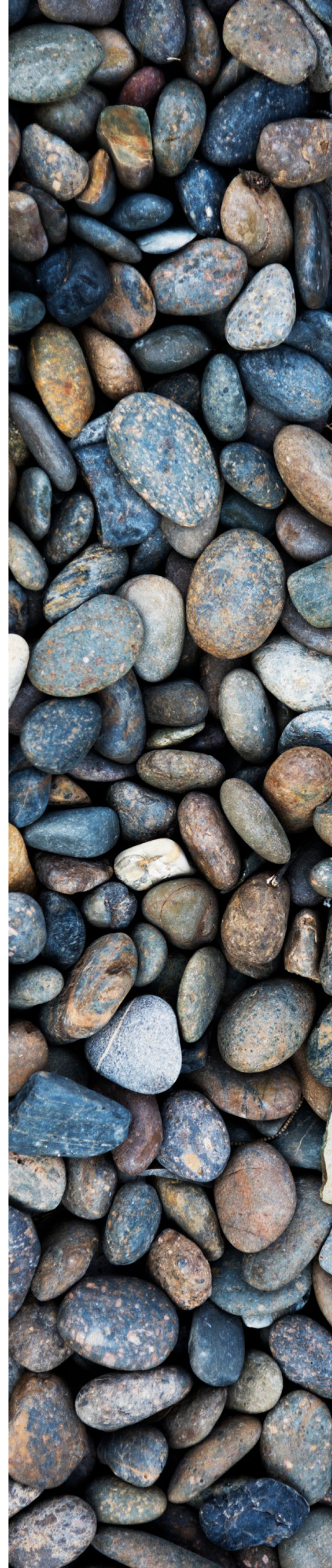
### COMMENTS FROM PAST PARTICIPANTS:

*I loved that it lit a fire in me again. I love being inspired and working towards goals; not just focused on the day to day items.*

*Thank you Susan ! For having given us a space to learn and grow as we continue our search to become better in our field, and specifically to become better human beings!*

COUPON CODE  
**50OFF**  
Expires August 31, 2023

**Special Discount for Participants of this Webinar: Use the Coupon Code to Save \$50 off the Registration Fee.** If you have any questions about this program or the discounts available, please **contact me** to set up a time for us to talk.



# Join Susan

## DESIGNING AND FACILITATING INNOVATIVE PROFESSIONAL LEARNING EXPERIENCES – LATE FALL 2023

[CLICK HERE FOR COURSE DETAILS & REGISTRATION](#)

Do you have a unique skill or talent that you would like to share with other early childhood professionals? Sharing your knowledge and passion is an impactful way to enhance your professional skills and improve the early childhood field! This four-part interactive workshop series will guide you in creating a professional learning experience that showcases a specific area of interest or expertise you would like to present to early childhood professionals.

Susan MacDonald will use her experience as a professional speaker and instructional designer to support you in identifying an innovative focus for your project and provide a framework for bringing your project to life.

### COURSE SCHEDULE:

The live course sessions will be held from 1:00 – 2:30 pm EST on:

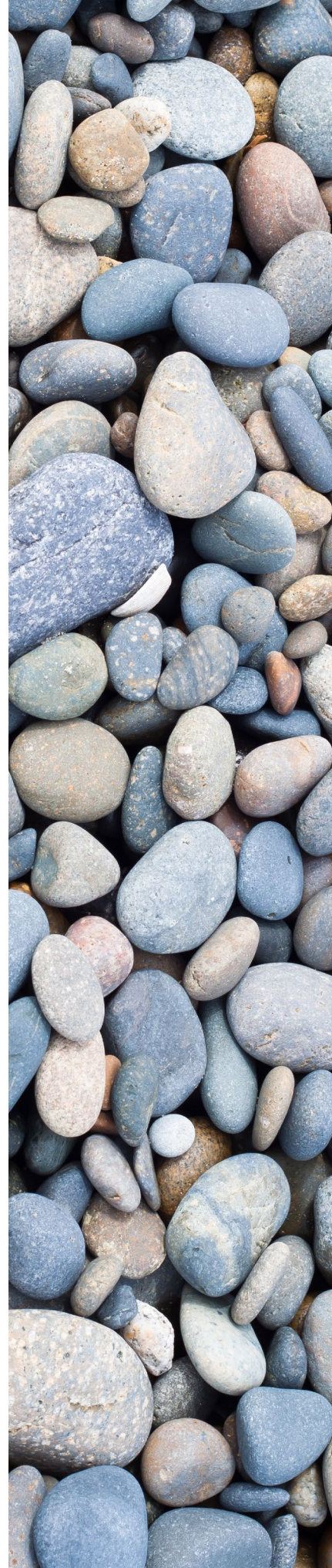
- *October 19, 2023*
- *November 16, 2023*
- *November 2, 2023*
- *November 30, 2023*

This workshop series includes::

- **Four live sessions** via Zoom. Each session will be recorded and posted to the course site.
- **A comprehensive workbook** to guide you in creating your professional development project
- **A course site with a private discussion board** to interact with course participants and share resources.
- **An opportunity to receive feedback** on your project from Susan.
- **A ten hour professional development certificate.**

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# Susan's Books

## INSPIRING EARLY CHILDHOOD LEADERSHIP

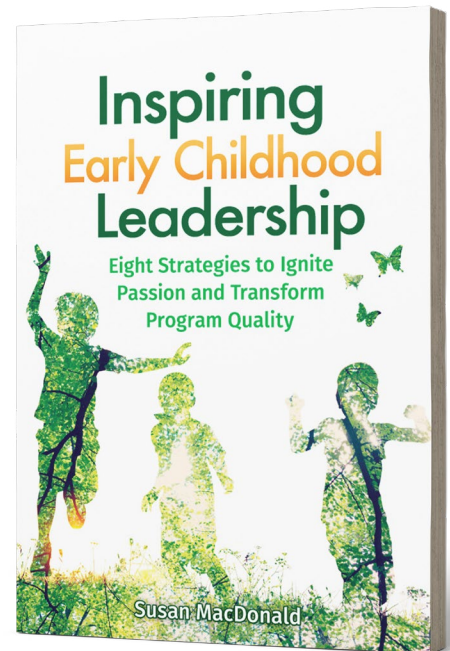
Eight Strategies to Ignite Passion and Transform Program Quality

A positive, strengths-based leadership system is the key to transforming the quality of early childhood programs. Inspiring Early Childhood Leadership lays out strategies designed to support program leaders in finding new ways to reduce the levels of stress on themselves and their staff, and move into a unified, engaging system for leading with passion, intention, and purpose.

Grounded in current research, the book incorporates decades-old best practices, making the strategies appropriate for leaders of all backgrounds. The book addresses common dilemmas:

- How do I motivate and inspire teachers?
- How can I be the most effective in observing and giving nonjudgmental feedback?
- How can I be more confident in my role as a leader?
- How can I manage my time more effectively?

Author Susan MacDonald's goal is to take leaders past their challenges with a vision of new possibilities so they can ensure a high-quality learning environments, fueled by positive, engaging energy.



[CLICK TO PURCHASE](#)

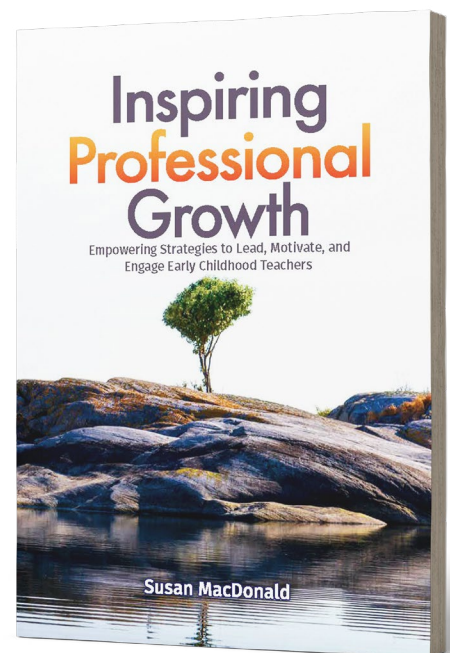
## INSPIRING PROFESSIONAL GROWTH

Empowering Strategies to Lead, Motivate, and Engage Early Childhood Teachers

You've probably seen it: frustration builds, teacher turnover rises, staff meetings become insufferable, indifference breeds throughout the school. Spark change! When your staff feels supported and empowered to grow and develop their skills, your program and the children will thrive.

Inspiring Professional Growth, the follow-up to Inspiring Early Childhood Leadership, addresses the need for offering nurturing and empowering professional development. This book provides leaders with a framework to create a system that supports teachers throughout their careers.

- Gain confidence in your leadership role
- Establish a growth culture
- Find effective ways to work with challenging staff members
- Cultivate collaboration and collective goal setting
- Facilitate meaningful professional development



[CLICK TO PURCHASE](#)