

What are you doing with those stones?

LEADING IDEAS

By Jim Paterno
From *Building a Cathedral*

Several years ago a friend shared with me a story of a sojourner who came upon three individuals working with stone. Curious as to what the workers were doing with the stones, the traveler approaches the first worker and asks, "What are you doing with these stones?"

Without hesitation the worker mindlessly replies, "I am a stone cutter and I am cutting stones." Still

unsure of what was being done with these stones, the sojourner approaches the second worker and asks, "What are you doing with these stones?" Pausing momentarily, the worker glances at the sojourner and explains, "I am a stone cutter and I am trying to make

enough money to support my family." With two different answers to the same task, the would-be philosopher could not resist questioning the third worker. "Excuse me," he states. "Could you tell me what you are doing with this stones?" The worker stops what he is doing.

Brings his mallet to his side. Deep in thought, the worker slowly brings his gaze to this questioning passer-by and explains, "I am a stone cutter, and I

am building a cathedral!"

Much like the third worker, we too are building cathedrals. We help shape the very stones that will maintain foundations, extend structures, and weather adversity. The strength and integrity of which resides in the master stone cutters.....teachers.

**"Knowing what
you're doing
helps..."**

Test the 80/20 Principle in your own school life

The 80/20 Principle

Gratification:

Does 20% of your work give you 80% of your satisfaction?

Doers:

Do 20% of your staff serve on 80% of all task committees? (Think evaluation teams).

Results:

Does 20% of your efforts and time yield 80% of desired results?

Effectiveness:

Do about 20% of your staff develop 80% of the best solutions?

Fighting fires:

Are 80% of your headaches and heartaches caused by 20% of your problems?

Stress:

Again, are 80% of your headaches and heartaches caused by 20% of your problems?

Development:

Do about 20% of your donors produce 80% of your income?

Interruptions:

Do the same 20% of people interrupt 80% of the time?

Teaching:

Do 20% of the students take up 80% of the teacher's time?

Actions for Candidates

Figure out what you do well and what you need to do well. Then let go. Delegate as much of the rest as you can.

Develop your school leadership competencies:

- volunteer to lead curriculum development or other school initiatives
- serve on a board committee
- present at a regional conference
- write an article for your school's magazine or local newspaper

Focus on the 20% of the sources that are likely to give you at least 80% success. (Yes, The Education Group can help you here.)

Be there. Join the 20% group now.

- Anticipate problems
- Offer concrete solutions
- Bring other staff on board
- Take responsibility for the outcome

Take stock.

- Assess
- Prioritize
- Fix the problem the first time
- Reduce the 80 percent of activity that consumes great amounts of time and energy, but provides little in terms of desirable outcomes

In your personal and professional life, concentrate on the relatively few activities that contribute the most to your personal fulfillment.

Many capital campaign specialists suggest it could be as high as 10%/90%. The converse rule is that 90% of your donors will only yield 10% of any targeted dollar amount.

This ratio can be found in a disturbing pattern that is observed regarding differences in gender behavior: In any given exchange, men tend to interrupt women 80% of the time; men interrupt other men only 20% of the time.

This is as true of students with learning or behavioral challenges as it is of the 20% of students who answer teachers' questions 80% of the time.