



# NOW WE'RE TALKING!

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21 Days to High-Performance  
Instructional Leadership

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Week 2: High-Performance Habits



# Our Agenda

- Chapter 6: Making Time to Visit Classrooms
- Chapter 7: Keeping Your Communication Channels Under Control
- Chapter 8: Managing the Work You're Not Doing Yet
- Chapter 9: Organizing Your To-Do List
- Chapter 10: Maximizing Your Mental Energy With Habits





# 6

Making Time  
to Visit Classrooms



# Chapter 6:

## Making Time to Visit Classrooms

- Reduce Interruptions From Emergencies
- Create Time Through Self-Discipline
- Schedule Short Time Blocks for Visiting Classrooms
- Coordinate and Track Your Visits
- Action Challenge: Schedule Your Classroom Visit Blocks



# The Plan: 500 Visits a Year

- 3 visits a day, ~10 minutes each
- Brief conversation afterward
- Every teacher every ~2 weeks
- 18 visits per teacher per year
- Consistent rotation
- Cluster by team/department/grade



# Frequency First

Before worrying about making your visits impactful, make sure your visits are happening—3 a day.



# Discuss

How have you been doing at making time to get into classrooms?

(Not the feedback part – just getting there)

What's working?

What's tough?



# Making Time





# Emergencies vs. Interruptions

Not all emergencies  
create interruptions.  
You decide.



# Emergencies vs. Interruptions

- Can office staff handle it?
- If not, can it wait 15 minutes?
- Identify situations in which to:
  - Interrupt & consult
  - Decide & inform

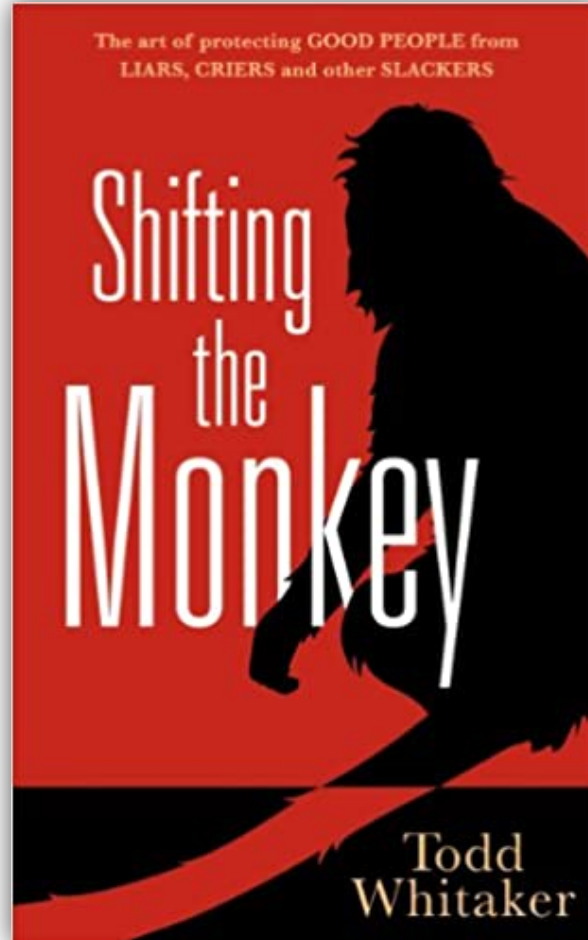
# The Value of Keeping People Waiting



# Keeping People Waiting

- Can they wait an hour?
- Can they wait 15 minutes?
- Can they wait five minutes?
- Can I hurry?
- Angry kid? Calms down.
- Angry parent? Thinks twice.
- Needy staff member? Doesn't shift the monkey.
- Finish current visit.

# Shifting the Monkey



# When Making People Wait Actually Helps

- Angry kid? Calms down.
- Angry parent? Thinks twice.
- Needy staff member? Doesn't shift the monkey.





Discuss:

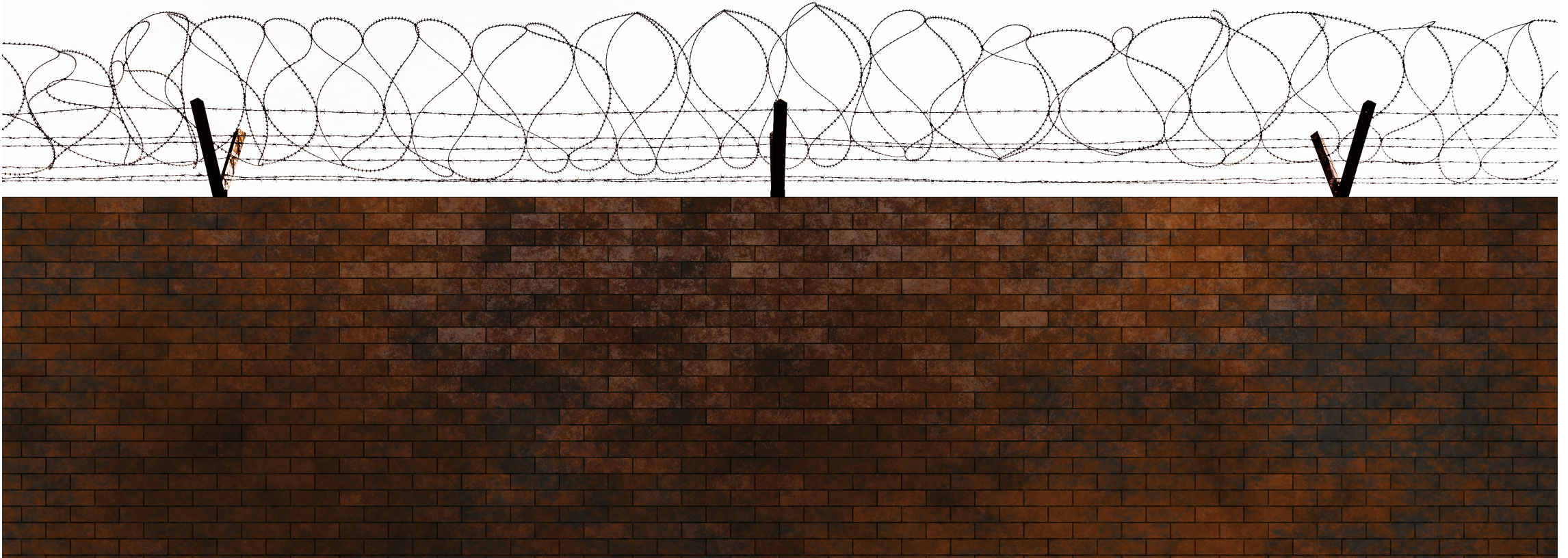
What situations *should* justify interrupting you when you're visiting classrooms?

# Two Myths About Making Time for Classroom Visits

1. "Prevent interruptions"
2. "Block off time"



# The “Prevent Interruptions” Myth





# Protecting Your Time from Interruptions: Low Walls & Gates



## Respond in Chat

- What “low walls” are in place in your school?
- Who are your “gates” who handle issues?
- How do people “jump over” to get you in an emergency?

# Self-Discipline



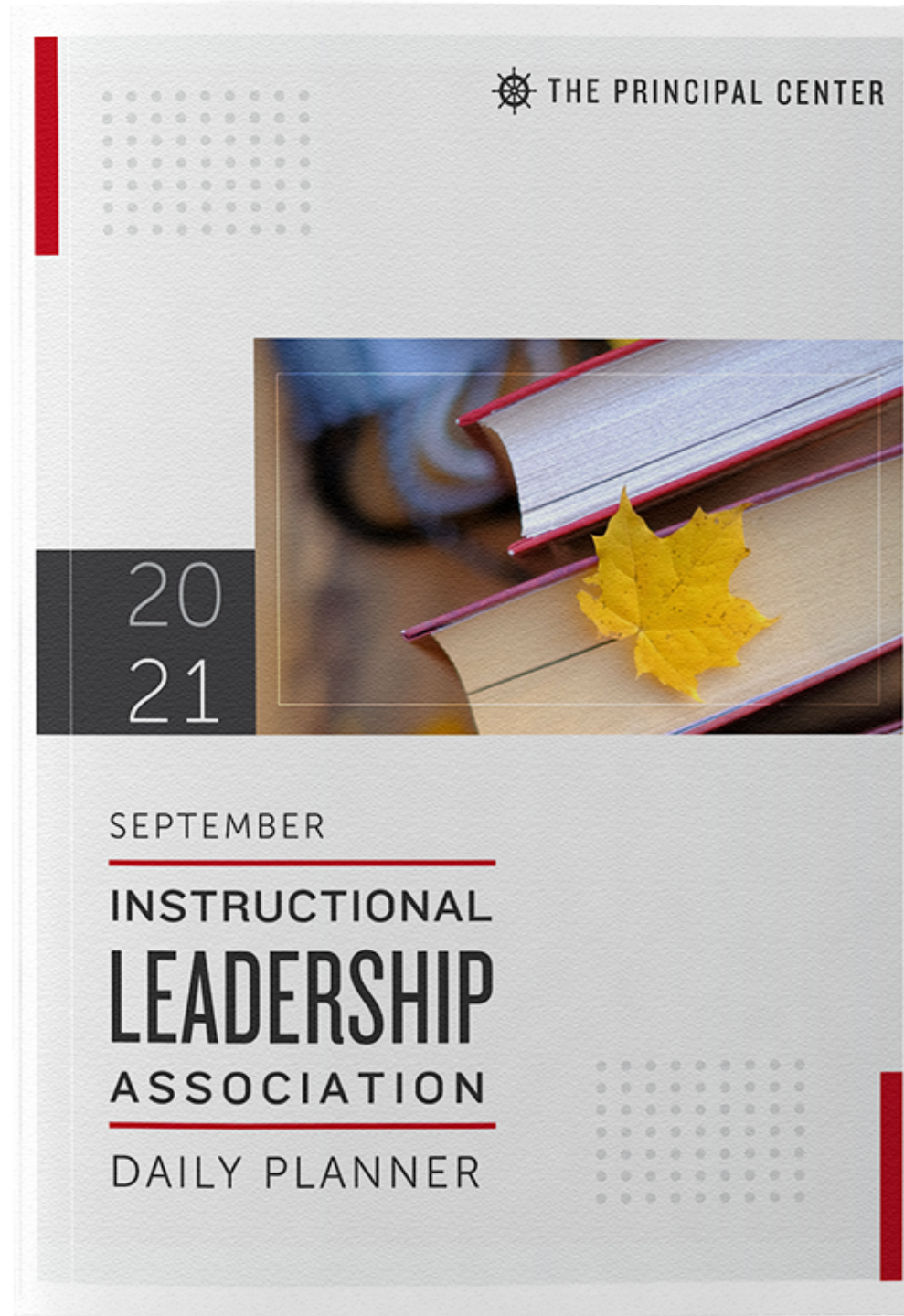


# Keeping Your Calendar Honest

- When surprises throw a wrench in your plans, don't scrap them—update them
- Make sure you're always doing what's on your calendar
- If you're not, put what you're doing on your calendar
- Move things around as needed

# Plan for Success

- Plan your week Sunday
- Plan tomorrow tonight
- Review calendar
- Create Daily Scorecard



# Daily Accountability



[PrincipalCenter.com/asqi-join](https://PrincipalCenter.com/asqi-join)

# A Resilient Walkthrough Schedule

## Elementary



## Secondary

- 8:00 Supervise in hall
    - 8:05 Start of 1<sup>st</sup> period
    - 8:20 Office work
    - 8:40 End of 1<sup>st</sup> period
  - 8:55 Supervise in hall
    - 9:00 Start of 2<sup>nd</sup> period
    - 9:15 Office work
    - 9:35 End of 2<sup>nd</sup> period
  - 9:50 Supervise in hall
    - 3 visits, whole period
- ...etc.

# Overschedule for Success:

## Aim for 3 visits a day

- 75% success rate: 4 timeslots → 3 visits
- 60% success rate: 5 timeslots → 3 visits
- 50% success rate: 6 timeslots → 3 visits
- 33% success rate: 9 timeslots → 3 visits

# Planning the Follow-Up Conversation

- One teacher per notecard
- Note prep/lunch schedule
- Plan to visit before prep OR
- Plan to talk after school or next day

Mrs. Smith		105	12:15-12:39		4th
Name		Room	Lunch		Prep
Period/Subject	Date	Date	Date	Date	Date
Chemistry	8/31				
AP Bio	9/14				
Chemistry					
Prep					
Phys Sci					
Biology	9/29				
Biology					

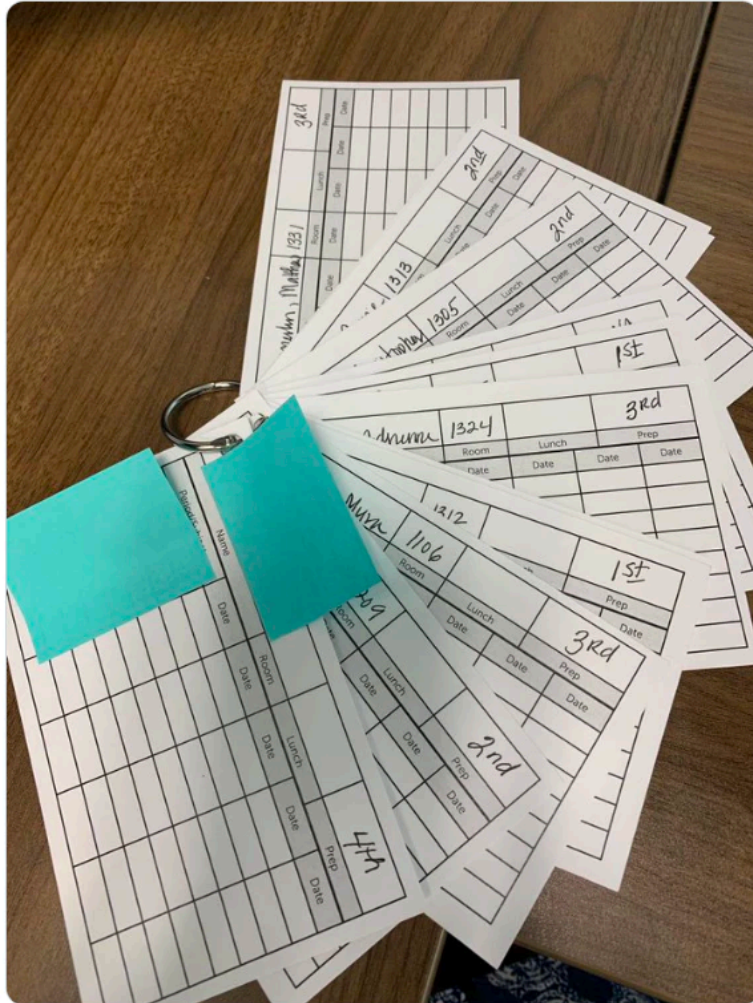




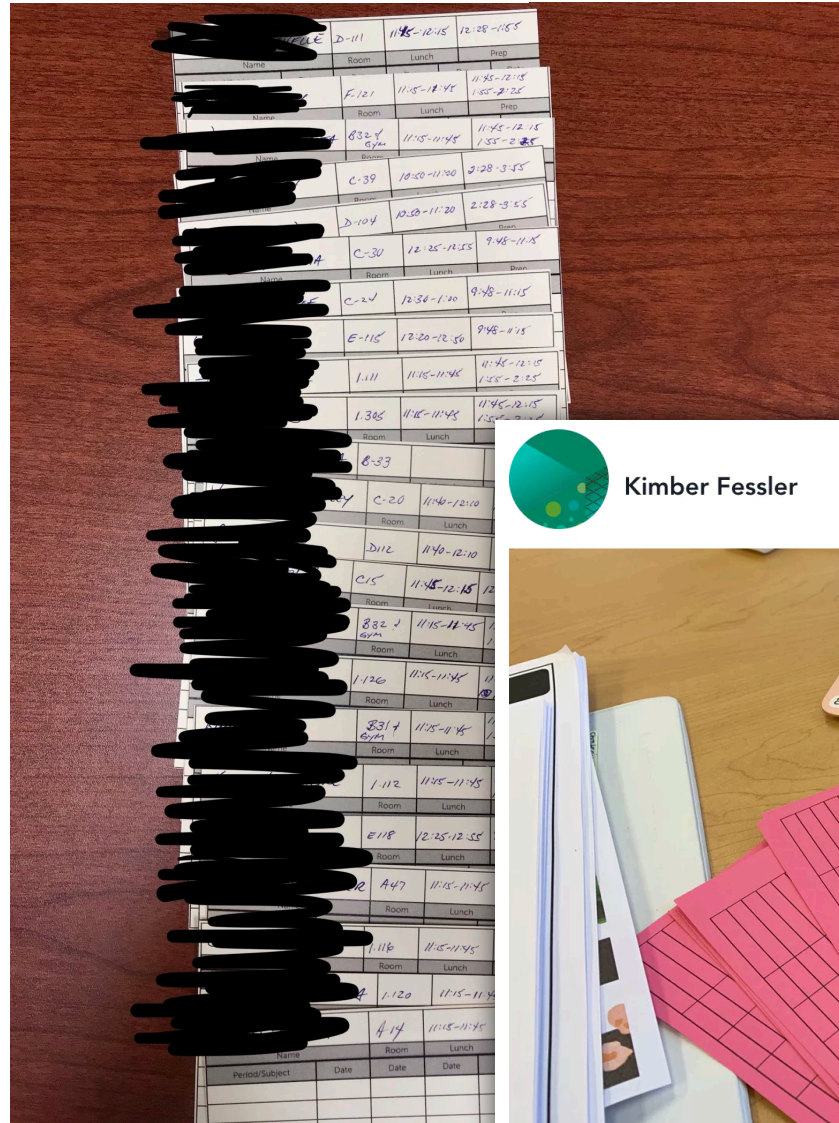
Shannon Pignato  
@ahsprincipal

Classroom walk-through cards are ready to go! It's going to be a great year of learning at AHS.

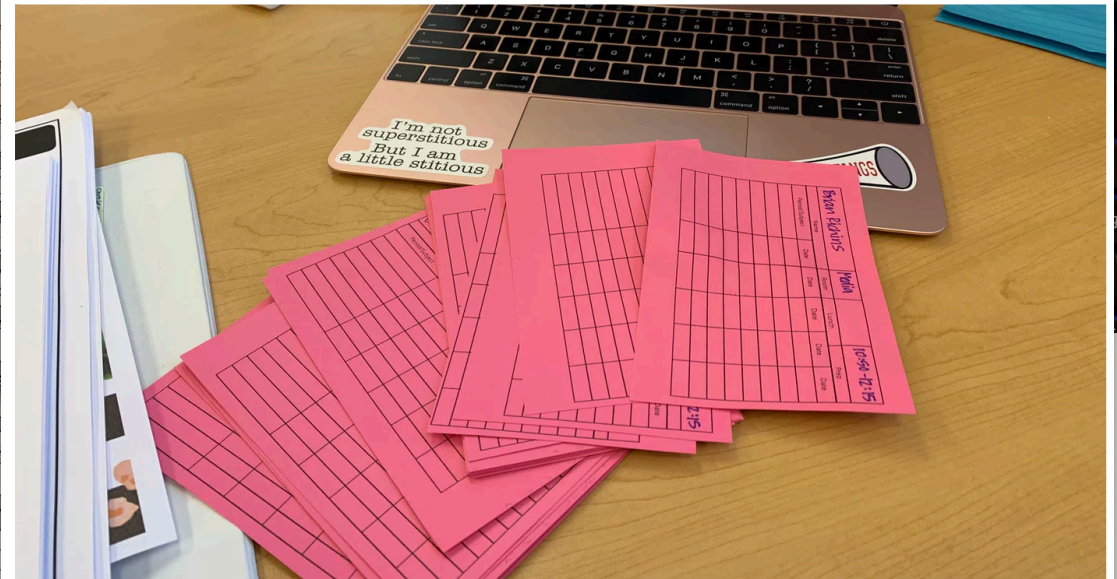
#AHSclearvision2020 @eduleadership



Brian Travis yesterday  
Assistant Principal



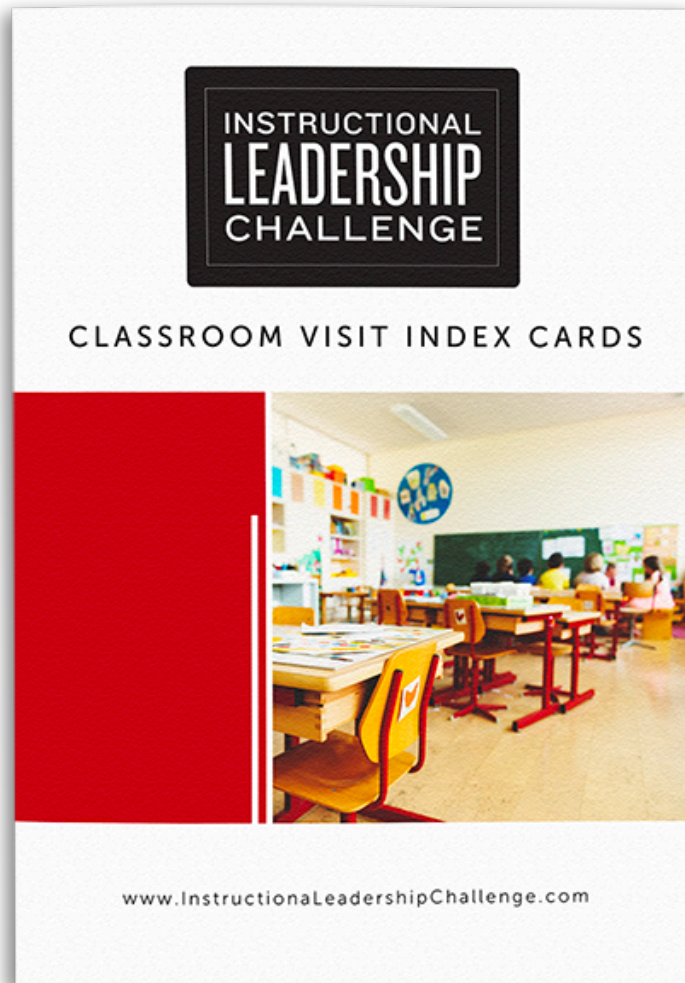
Kimber Fessler



I'm ready!



# Download the Notecard Template



PrincipalCenter.com/notecards-pdf

[illegible]

# Chapter 6 Action Challenge

- Make your daily visit schedule
- When are you most likely to avoid classrooms?
- When are you least likely to be interrupted?
- How can you make your office staff feel more supported in handling minor emergencies?



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# Keeping Your Communication Channels Under Control



# Get Current





# The Real Barriers

While it's hard to make time to get into  
classrooms, it's mostly a

**mental block**


not an actual shortage of time.

# High-Performance Instructional Leadership Roadmap Stage 1

**Productivity:  
Get Current!**

**Self-assessment:  
[PrincipalCenter.com/ilsa](https://PrincipalCenter.com/ilsa)**

**[PrincipalCenter.com/roadmap](https://PrincipalCenter.com/roadmap)**

 <b>EVIDENCE DRIVEN INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP ROADMAP</b>						
Stage	Productivity	Walkthroughs	Conversations	Framework	500 Classrooms	High-Performance Instructional Leadership
Focus	Get Current!	Get Into Classrooms!	Get Into Feedback Conversations!	Get Aligned & Specific!	Get Consistent & Impactful!	Get Strategic!
Level 1	I'm overwhelmed and can't even think about getting into classrooms	I rarely get into classrooms for informal visits, and do only the minimum required formal observations	I give teachers feedback only in the annual evaluation process or when I see something out of the ordinary	I evaluate teachers as satisfactory or unsatisfactory based on my professional judgment	I'm afraid to visit classrooms because I don't know what I'll see, and neither teachers nor students expect to see me	I know only what I see during formal observations, and don't have any sense of teachers' typical practice or how it relates to our school's goals or strategic plan
Level 2	I'm keeping my head above water, but can't get into classrooms consistently	I get into classrooms a few times a week, but I'm inconsistent and don't make it around to everyone	I give teachers written feedback from my informal visits, without having a conversation	I evaluate teachers according to a leveled rubric based on the evidence I've collected	I get into classrooms as I'm able, but I'm often thrown off-track by having to deal with unpleasant surprises, my visits catch teachers and students off-guard	I have a general sense of each teacher's practice, but am unclear how it relates to our school's goals and strategic plan
Level 3	I'm staying on top of my work so I can get into classrooms regularly	I get into three classrooms a day, every day, so I see every teacher on a 2-week rotation	I share my written evidence with the teacher immediately, and have an evidence-based feedback conversation on the spot or soon after my visit	I have regular, evidence-based conversations with teachers using the language of our instructional framework	I visit three classrooms a day, every day, so teachers and students are used to seeing me, and my feedback conversations are having an impact on teacher practice	I have a good sense of each teacher's practice in specific areas and how it relates to our school's goals and strategic plan
Level 4	I have well-optimized systems to keep me organized so I can confidently get into classrooms every day, without worrying about my other work	I visit every classroom every two weeks, and rotate my visits so I see each teacher at different times of day	I differentiate my feedback conversations using the boss (directive), coach (reflective), or leader (reflexive) roles depending on each teacher's needs, always sharing my written evidence immediately	I gather evidence of teacher practice using the language of our instructional framework, and have discipline-specific conversations with each teacher	Teachers and students expect to see me in classrooms, and I can see the impact it's having on students and on teacher practice in specific areas of our instructional framework	I have a clear sense of each teacher's level of performance in specific areas of our instructional framework and how it relates to our school's goals and strategic plan, so I can identify our biggest opportunities for school improvement

# Productivity: Get Current!

## Level 4:

*I have well-optimized systems to keep me organized so I can confidently get into classrooms every day, without worrying about my other work*

# Confidence In Your Systems

In order to get into classrooms every day, you must be able to

**set aside worry**

about all the work you're not done with.

# “I don’t have time for systems!”

- Well-optimized systems to keep yourself organized are more work to set up, but less work overall than not having a system
- Operating these systems can be just “one more thing” at first, but habits form over time



# Multiple Streams of Input



# Multiple Streams of Input

- Verbal requests in the hallway
- Meeting action items
- Emailed requests
- Voicemails
- District & state requests
- App notifications
- Messaging apps





A blurred background image showing a group of people in a meeting or workshop. Several hands are raised, suggesting an interactive session or a discussion. The image is faded and serves as a backdrop for the text.

**Discuss in chat:**

**What are all the various ways people reach you to get your help?**

# Be Selective About Interruptions

- Email
- Text
- Phone
- 2-way radio
- Messaging
- Social media
- PA system



# Fuzzy Channels



# Fuzzy Channels

- No way to “mark as unread”
- No way to forward
- Quickly lost in stream
- No way to turn into a task/reminder



# Stream vs. Inbox Apps

"Stream" apps present items in chronological order, with no ability to sort:

- Text messages
- Chat/messaging apps
- Social media
- Replies in an email discussion
- Face-to-face or two-way radio

# Funnel All Tasks Into One Place

- Email
- Paper notebook/planner
- Task app, e.g. ToDoist
- Notes app, e.g. Evernote

# Chapter 7 Action Challenge

- List your main communication channels & inboxes
- Which ones are OK to contain action items?
- Which ones should NOT contain action items?
- Where do you keep your REAL to-do list?

A background image showing a group of people's hands raised in a meeting or discussion, suggesting an interactive session. The image is faded and serves as a backdrop for the text.

**Discuss in chat:**

**What are your preferred ways to be interrupted?**

**What communication formats really don't need to interrupt you?**

A black and white photograph of a business meeting. Several people are seated around a table, looking at documents and a tablet. A large, white circle with a black border is superimposed over the center of the image, containing the number 8.

# 8

## Managing the Work You're Not Doing Yet



# Chapter 8: Managing the Work You Aren't Doing Yet

- Separate planning from doing
- Use a task-management app
- Keep your task lists short
- Prioritize SWOT—Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats

# The Mental Barrier

Un-triaged/disorganized work creates **stress and cognitive overhead** that makes it hard for us to get into classrooms with confidence.

You need systems you can trust.



**Discuss:**

**What has to feel “squared away” for you to feel confident getting into classrooms?**

# Get “Current”

- We can't—and don't need to—get all of our other work done before getting into classrooms
- The key is to **get current**—*triage* everything, and get it *organized*—so you know what you're leaving behind when you get into classrooms
- Eliminate clutter, minimize do-over decision-making, and use just-in-time organization.

# The Problem

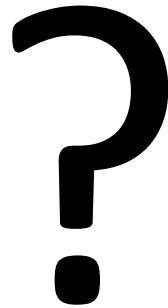
- Multiple ways for people to reach you & give you work
- No way to "mark as unread" or organize in most communication tools
- Multiple streams & inboxes to check to get "current"



# The Default Inbox App

For most people, their default email app is **email**, but it's not great for managing tasks. Why organize by:

- Date received
- Sender name
- Sender's description
- Folder



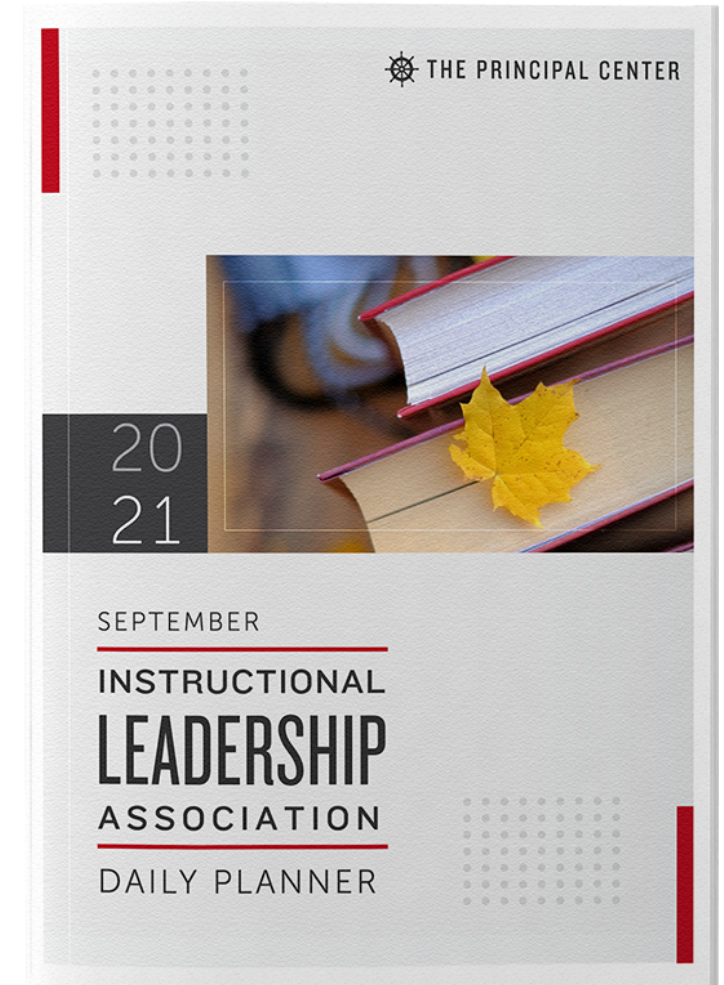
# Your “Real” To-Do List

We tend to keep multiple systems:

- Some systems for everything we’re not doing
- Some for the select things we’ll REALLY do

# Separate Planning from Doing

- Plan the night before
- Review electronic calendar
- Review electronic task app
- Hand-write a specific plan



# Task App Recommendations

- ToDoist
- Asana
- Google Keep
- Evernote
- Email App?



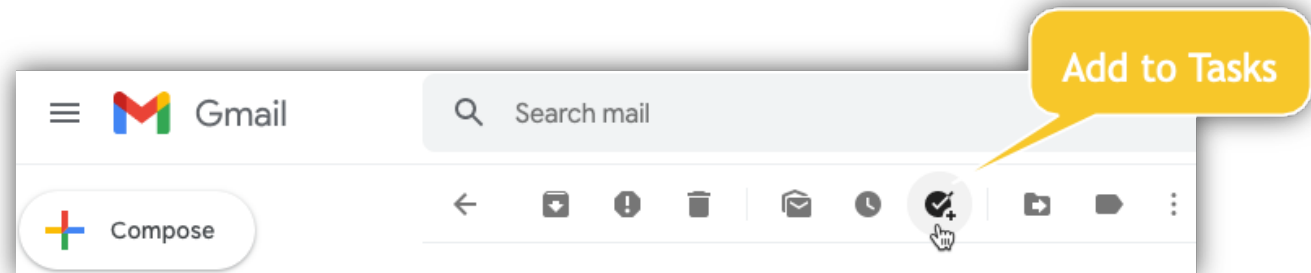
Google Keep



todoist



Evernote

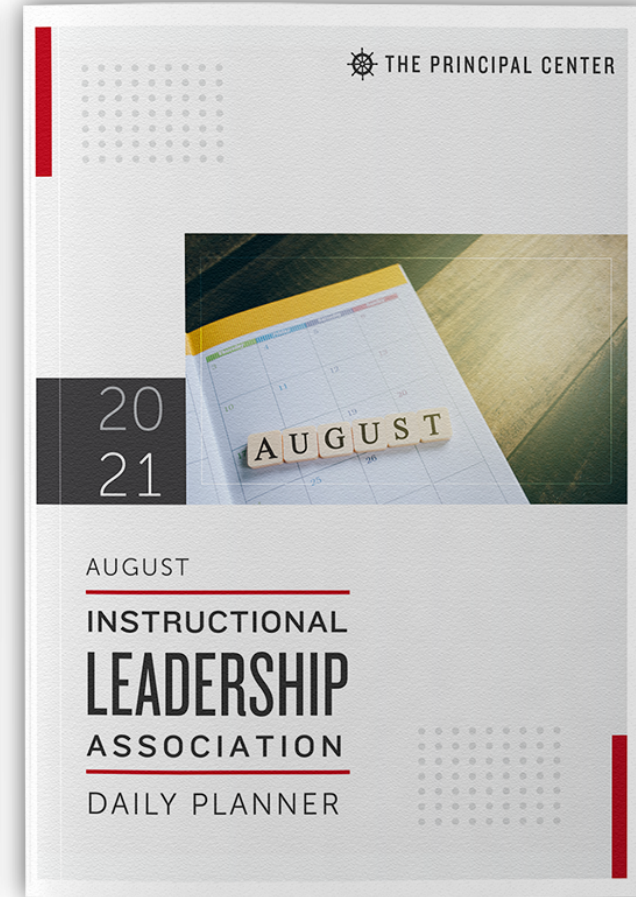
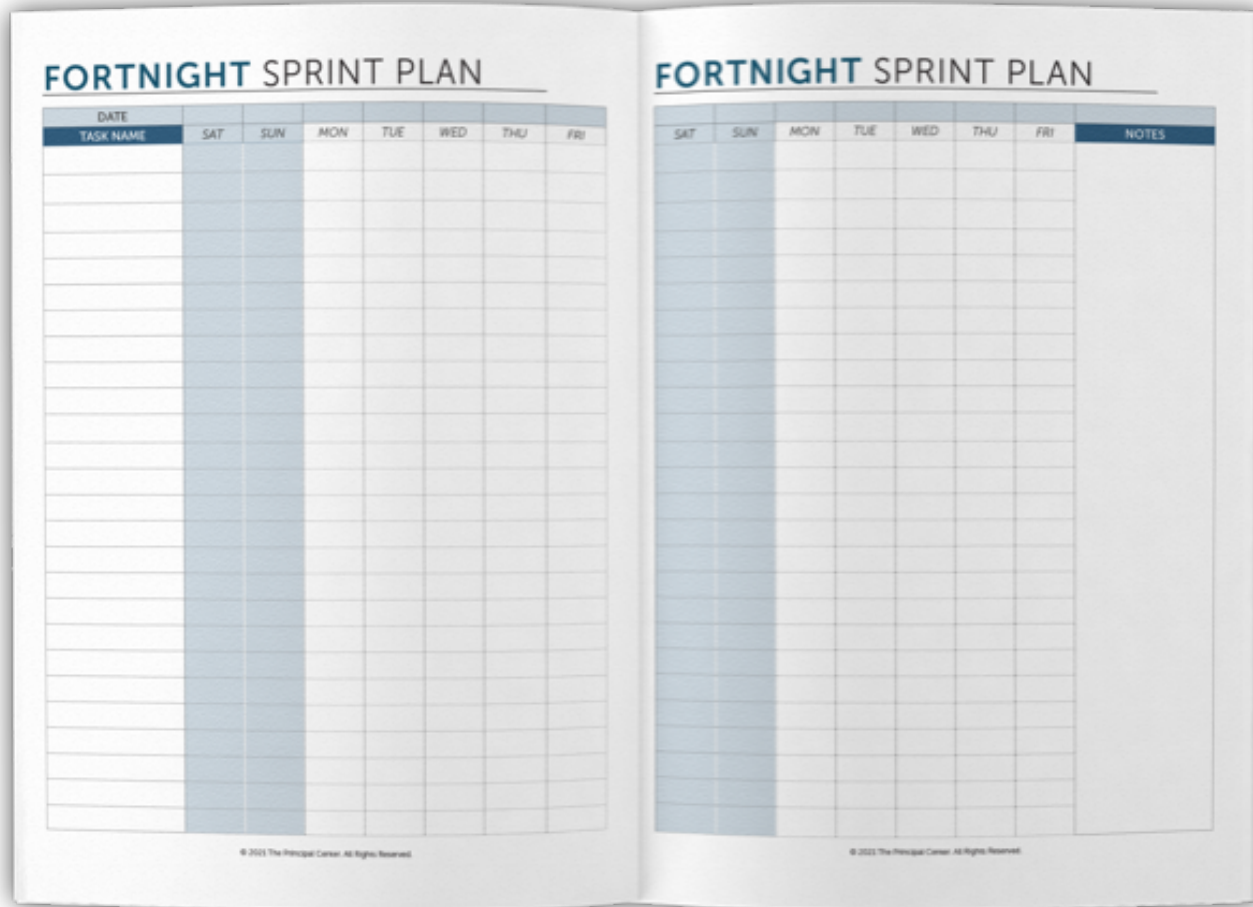


# Better Ways to Organize

- Due Date
- Search Term
- Meeting/Agenda/Project
- Flag/Star



# Managing Tasks by Hand



# The Daily Scorecard

- Plan your week with the 2-page Fortnight spread
- Plan each day's Daily Scorecard & Agenda
- Mark off tasks as you complete them

# Inbox Zero

Get to Inbox Zero daily in both your  
email and task app, so you're  
"current" on your work

# Backlogs, Not To-Do Lists

- Keep lists prioritized—most important items at the top
- Always do the item at the top first—if not, move whatever you're about to do to the top
- Don't expect to get everything done
- Use other fields like Due Date, too

# How To Make Sure You Follow Up

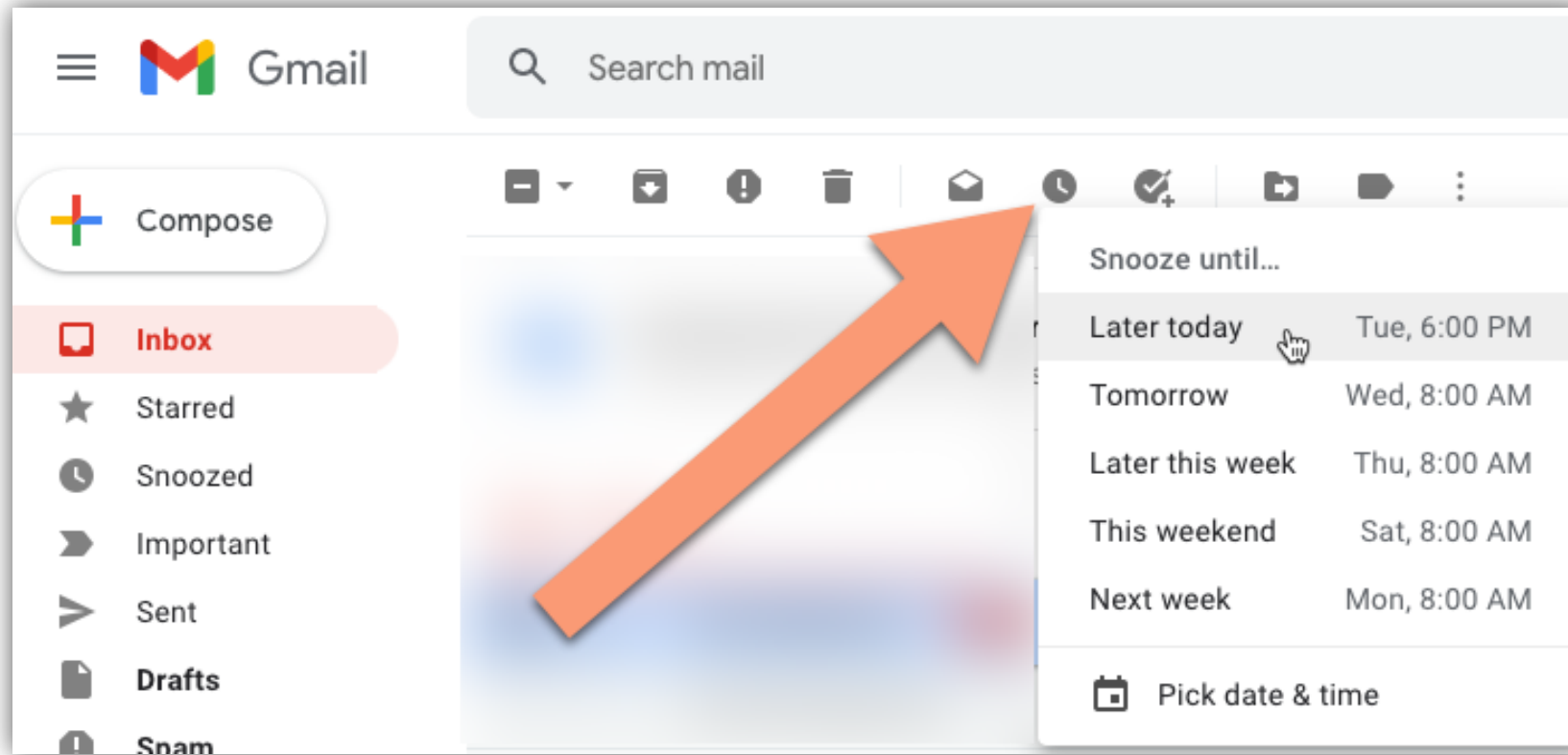
The best way to make sure you follow  
up on unresolved issues is with

**date-based**

reminders



# Gmail's Snooze Feature



# Dedicated Service: FollowUpThen.com

- tomorrow@followupthen.com
- 2weeks@followupthen.com
- Jan5@followupthen.com
- 2pm@followupthen.com

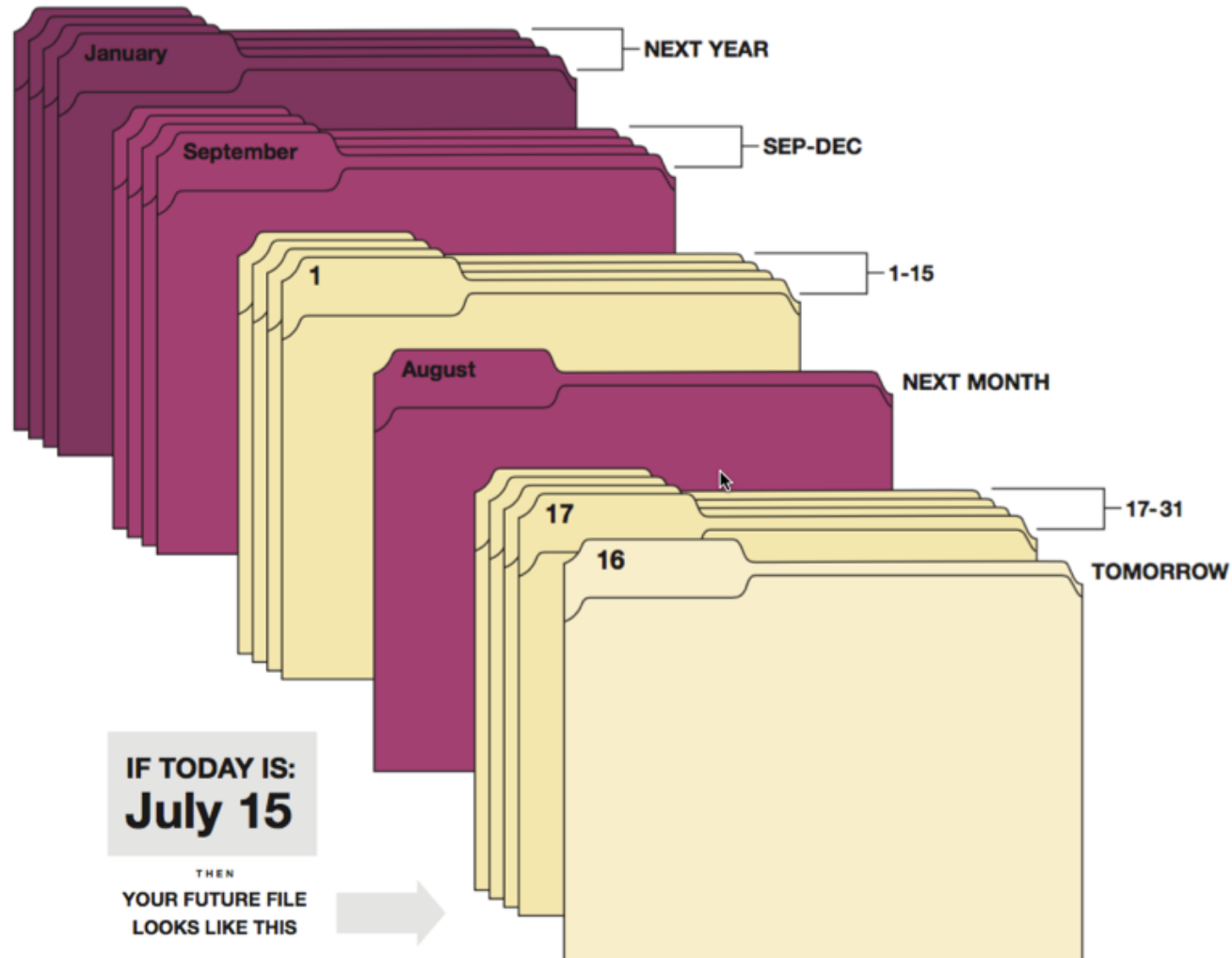
Additional examples:  
FollowUpThen.com/how

**followupthen**

# Danny, High School Principal



# Hardcopy Reminders: Future File







[PrincipalCenter.com/future-pdf](https://PrincipalCenter.com/future-pdf)

# Chapter 8 Action Challenge

- How can I get all of my to-dos into one “inbox”?
- How can I get “current” on this inbox daily, so I feel confident that I’m not missing anything?



9

## Organizing Your To-Do List

# Chapter 9: Organizing Your To-Do List

- Organize by action with the PEEP approach
- Organize by due date, time required, and energy level
- Out of sight, out of mind, but not out of control

# Best Practices

- Separate deciding from doing
- Keep lists short
- Organize by action, not abstract category



# A To-Do List Pattern To Avoid

- Start using a new system
- Fill it up with tasks you're putting off
- Ignore these tasks, but keep adding more
- Use a different system for the tasks you feel like doing
- Realize it's not working and find a new system
- Repeat



# App-agnostic

- It doesn't matter what productivity/task app you use
- Low-tech can be as good as high-tech
- What matters is that you use ONE system

# The Case for A Task App

- Search, sort, & filter
- Date- and time-based reminders
- Location-based reminders



**todoist**



Google Keep



**Evernote**

# Put It On The Agenda

- Meetings
- Committees
- Individual people
- Office team



# Low-Energy Tasks

- Archiving emails
- Quick replies
- Saving information





# Chapter 9 Action Challenge

- What permanent “agenda” buckets can I set up in my task app?
- What am I categorizing conceptually, that I could instead organize by action with a PEEP (Place for Everything, Everything in its Place)?
- What low-energy or quick tasks could I do during specific times of day if I had them all in one place?

A black and white photograph of a business meeting. Several people are seated around a table, looking at documents and a tablet. One person is holding a pen, ready to write. The scene is professional and collaborative.

10

# Maximizing Your Mental Energy With Habits

# Chapter 10: Maximizing Your Mental Energy with Habits

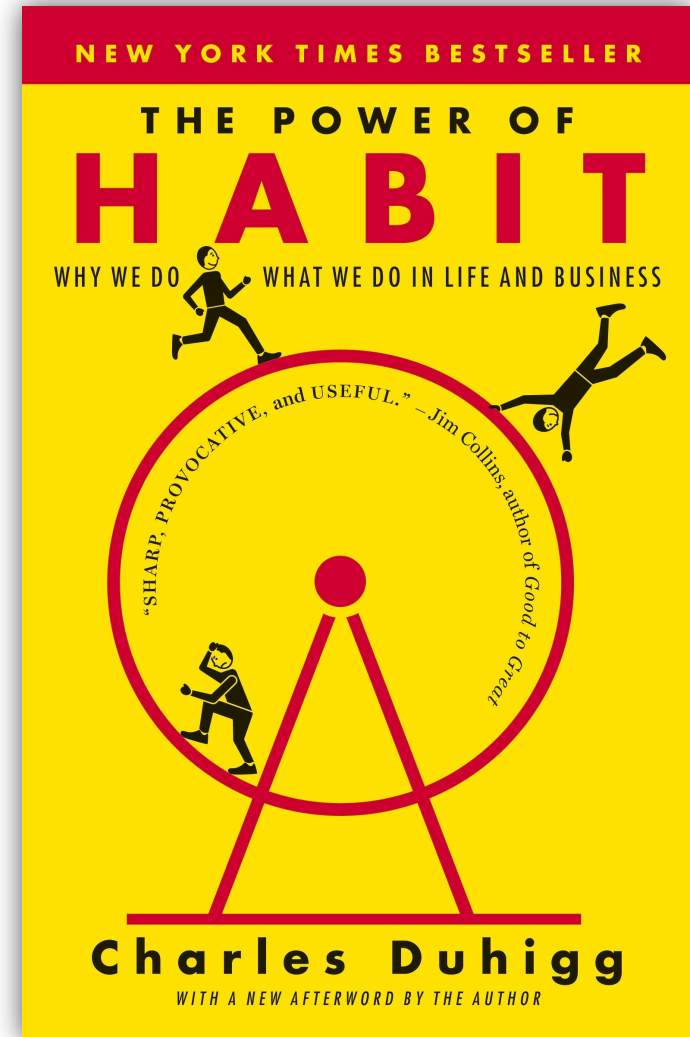
- Learn how patterns become habits
- Understand how habits work
- See why habits matter
- Conserve mental energy with habits
- Discover five ways to change habits

# Chapter 10 Essential Question

How can we best set ourselves up for success, so we get into classrooms almost on autopilot?

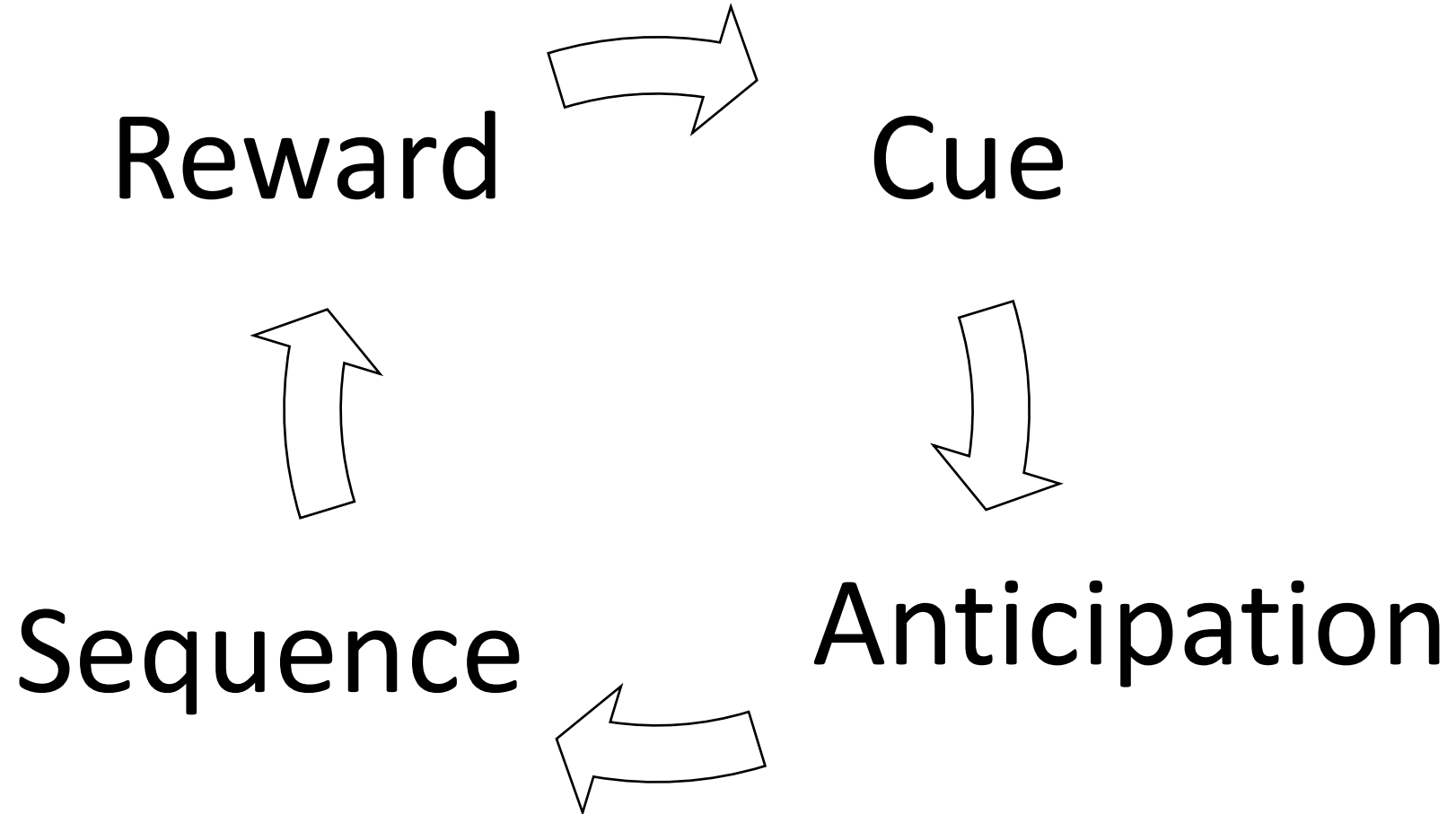
# 40% of Life is Habits

- We form many habits unintentionally over time
- We can design new habits
- We can change habits we aren't happy with



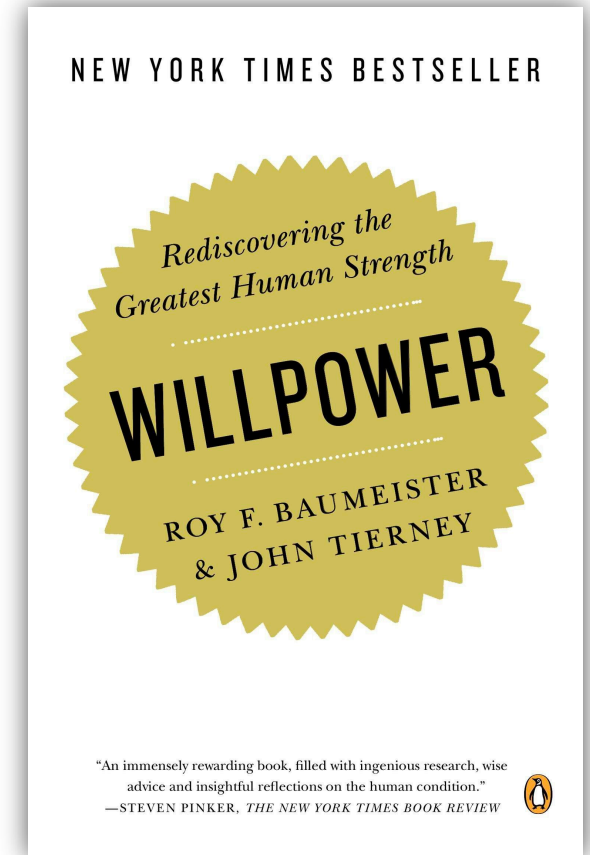


# How Habits Work



# Habits and Mental Energy

- We have a fixed amount of mental energy each day
- Decision-making, self-regulation, and heavy thinking cause us to expend our mental energy
- Acting out of habit does NOT consume as much mental energy, because habits reduce active decision-making



# Big Implications: Sequencing

- Do low-importance, high-volume decision-making later in the day
- Do your most important, cognitively demanding work early in the day
- Rely on habits (“autopilot”) as much as possible

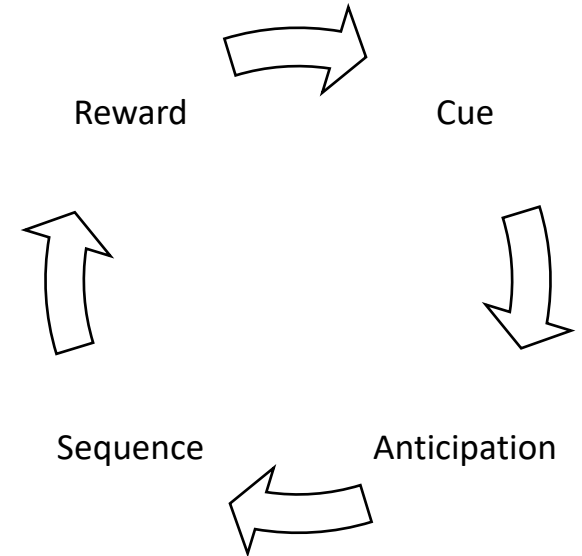
# Daily Benchmarks

Seek the satisfying mental rewards of:

- Clearing out your email inbox
- Getting your task app current
- Earning 10 points on your daily scorecard
- Planning tomorrow in your planner

# 5 Ways to Change Bad Habits

1. **Substitute:** Keep the cue & reward, but make a personal rule changing the sequence
2. **Disrupt:** Interfere with the sequence by making it impractical
3. **Punish:** Short-circuit the reward by adding a negative consequence
4. **Avoid:** Remove the cue to avoid triggering the habit loop
5. **Prevent:** Preempt the cue with another habit





A background image showing several hands reaching out towards the center, creating a sense of collaboration and discussion. The image is faded and serves as a backdrop for the text.

# Discuss

- What current habits are most helpful for getting into classrooms?
- What habits might you form/change next?

# Chapter 10 Action Challenge

- What do you most enjoy about visiting classrooms? How can you build those rewards into every visit?
- What habits prevent you from getting into classrooms? What triggers those habits?
- How can you alter the cues, sequences, or rewards to create more effective replacement habits?

# Action Items

- Catch up on earlier sessions
- Read/listen through Chapter 15
- Keep getting into classrooms
- Send your staff roster to [justin@principalcenter.com](mailto:justin@principalcenter.com)
- Start using Repertoire Content Creator

