





“No situation is so clear that you simply pull a technique off the shelf and use it.”







Professional development is typically something you go off and do, disconnected from the workplace. You can get good ideas from that, but unless you have a learning culture that's actively implementing that learning day-after-day, you won't achieve breakthrough results.

As Richard Elmore puts it, you're never going to get substantial change unless you're learning in the setting where you work.

What's more, the environment is changing rapidly. New technologies are coming along, and so this is an ongoing and active proposition. The best organizations say "If we haven't created an environment that enables people to learn day-after-day, we've failed."

And now we move into the systems arena. Please tell us about the fifth secret: transparency rules?

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motivate that person to change, or in some cases retire, which is fine as well.

I want to get back to this concept of interaction between the secrets. But before we do let's explore secret six: systems learn.

A. Well, this secret really focuses on the whole-systems aspect of continuous learning, and one way of expressing it is that the learning continues even if the leader leaves.

This aspect of the secret revolves around what I would describe as coalescing leadership, in which principals are conscious of developing other leaders. In fact, they do it as a matter of course. They don't



use when they are trying to effect change?
What is their own theory of action? In

So love your employees and peer interaction
in combination will build each other up.

Another way of putting it is that one
secret's weakness is another secret's
strength. Transparency, for example,
is the strength of looking at hard facts.
Peer interaction might be seen as a
"softer" variable. When you put those two
together, you have accountability – pres-
sure – and peer interaction – support –
working interactively.

If you only employ one secret at a time,
you miss the synergy, the multiplier effect.

You may also
find yourself in
trouble because
that secret's
weakness isn't
balanced by
another secret's
strength.

**What advice would you give principals
about incorporating the secrets into
professional practice?**

A. I would stress two things. On an
individual basis, I would suggest that
principals take stock of themselves across
the dimensions of this (or any other)
theory of action. Where are their strong
and weak points? What is in place now?
What is not? What assumptions do they

