

**SCHOOL CULTURE AND  
COMMUNICATION**

**LEADERSHIP  
PRAXIS: THE  
INTERSECTION OF  
THEORY AND  
REALITY**

**DR JOE O'CONNELL  
ACCS NOVEMBER 23<sup>RD</sup> 2018**

# THE KNOWN KNOWNS

- Education is fundamentally relational
- There is a cultural disposition in Ireland to a *leader-centric* view of leadership
- We are at the cusp of significant change (albeit over time) in relation to a robust distributed leadership approach
- That we live in an era of focus on compliance (audit culture)
- Communication is the essential tool in human technology!

# RECOGNITION OF HUME'S LAW

- The is-ought problem
- Prescriptive versus descriptive

# EXPECTATIONS (10 OUGHTS!)

- Implementing a shared vision for improvement
- Developing leadership capacity throughout the school
- Developing an inclusive approach to improvement planning
- Developing social and emotional learning for all learners
- Leading a digital learning strategy
- Leading the professional learning of colleagues
- Leading teams for school improvement
- Implementing self-evaluation for organisational improvement
- Using coaching approaches for
- Using data effectively for school improvement

## **30 PERSONAL/PROFESSIONAL ATTRIBUTES ADVOCATED FOR SENIOR LEADERS**

<b>Exercise Tact/Diplomacy</b>	<b>To maintain objectivity</b>	<b>To encourage</b>
<b>Maintain Humour</b>	<b>To be empathetic when required</b>	<b>To be decisive in taking considered actions</b>
<b>The ability to relax people</b>	<b>To be sensitive in word and deed</b>	<b>Not to rush to judgement</b>
<b>To have an open mind to suggestions</b>	<b>To recognises abilities of others and utilise them</b>	<b>To be discrete and confidential</b>
<b>To be non-threatening</b>	<b>To be a catalyst for positive change</b>	<b>To provide clarity and direction</b>
<b>To motivate</b>	<b>To be a clear communicator</b>	<b>To intervene only when required</b>
<b>To respond in a timely manner</b>	<b>To delegate appropriately</b>	<b>To be consistent in approach</b>
<b>To know when to remain silent</b>	<b>To listen effectively</b>	<b>To think on his/her feet</b>
<b>To see opportunities</b>	<b>To observe and consider before commenting</b>	<b>To empower and affirm</b>
<b>To have a questioning mind</b>	<b>To support coordination but not have to be directly overseeing it</b>	<b>To understand group dynamics</b>

# PRAXIS

- The “is” and how best to respond as opposed to react

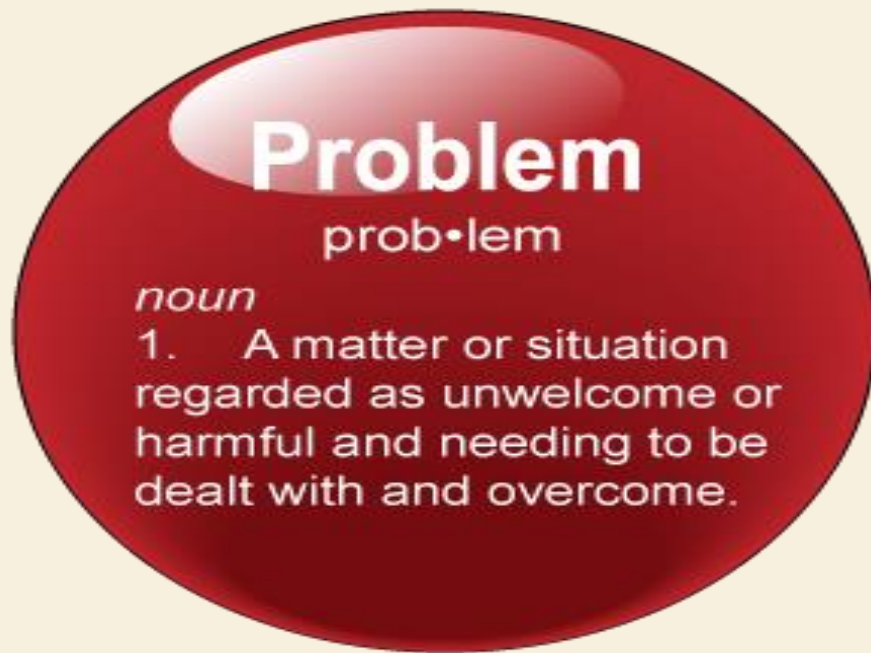
# SOMETIMES YOU HAVE TO BITE YOUR TONGUE

- It was a great summer break, all too short though!



# THE RUSH TO SHARE AND TRANSFER OWNERSHIP!

- We've got a problem



**JUST SOLVE THE  
PROBLEM**



# MY ISSUE TAKES PRIORITY OVER EVERYTHING

- I know you're busy but this won't take a second...



# **LABELLING FOR EMPHASIS AND PROJECTING THE REAL CAUSE....**

- In all my years, this crew has to be the worst ever



# TRYING TO MAKE YOU FEEL INEFFECTIVE

- Why can't he be expelled? He'd be gone a 1,000 times over in St.....

Don't dig up  
in doubt  
what you planted  
in faith.

- ELISABETH ELLOT -

# COMMUNICATION IS VERY POOR HERE.....THE EXCUSE

- I was never told that



*"Give it to me straight, Doc. How long do I have to ignore your advice?"*

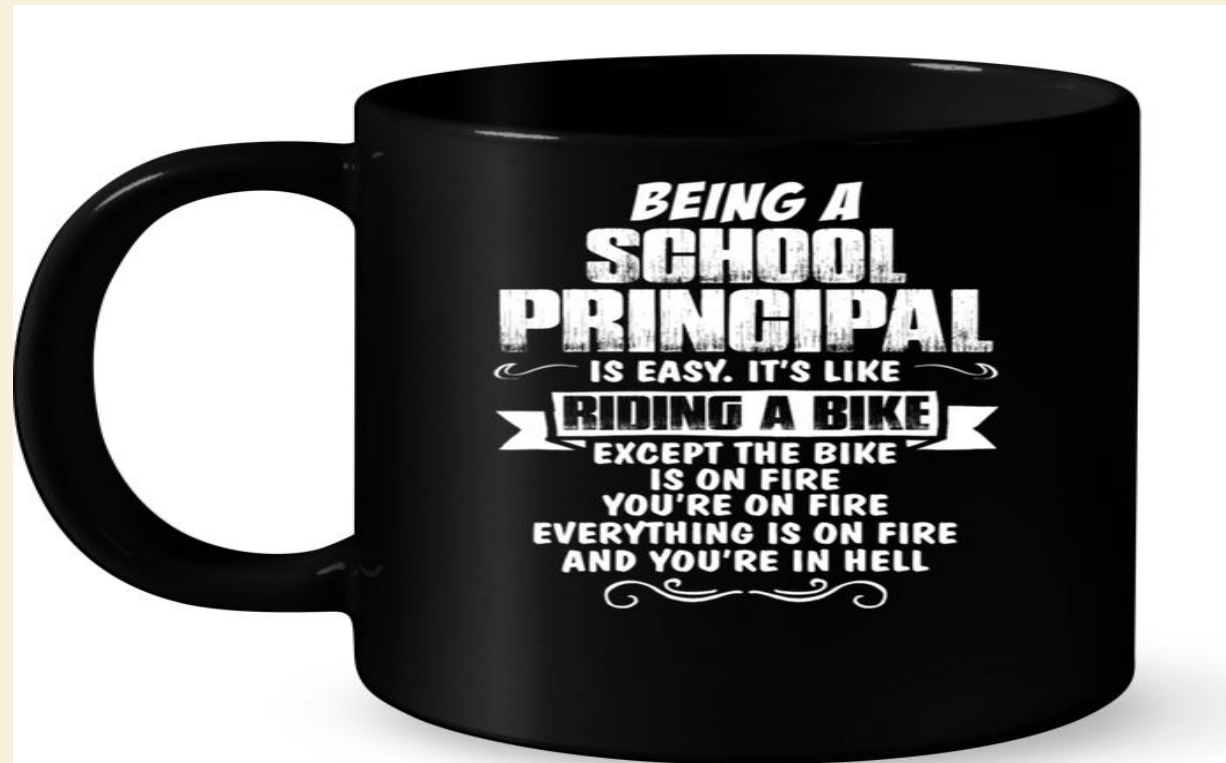
# ANOTHER PUT DOWN RE YOUR STYLE OF COMMUNICATION

- I believe in face to face as opposed to e-communication.....



# WHEN IT IS INTIMATED THAT YOU DON'T REALLY UNDERSTAND OR APPRECIATE THE CHALLENGES

- What are they doing all day anyway?



# I REALLY SHOULD HAVE GOT THAT JOB!

- Discipline is gone to hell here



# CLAIMING RANK AND TITLE

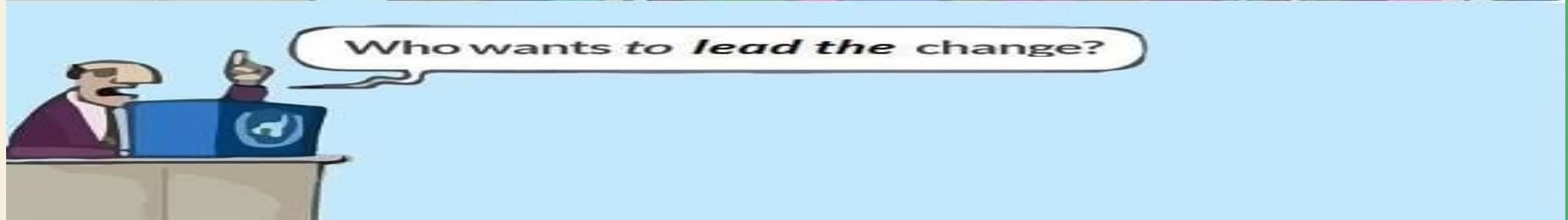
- I'm a professional and should be respected as one, I want/demand a written apology





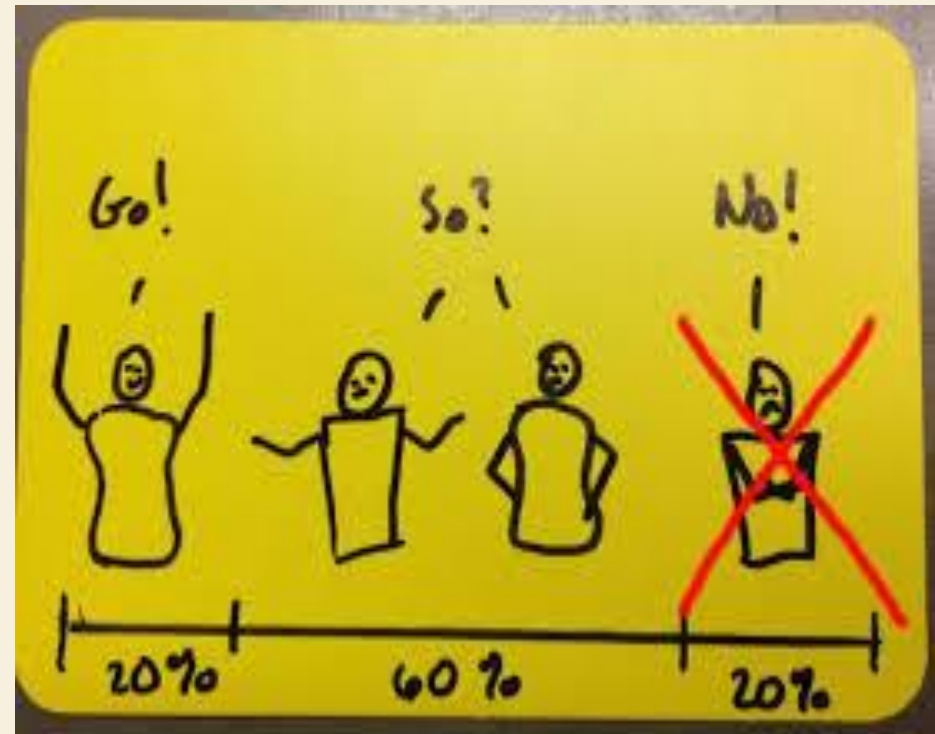
# TO MY SATISFACTION AND BY SOMEBODY ELSE!!!

- Things need to change around here.....



# RESISTORS TO CHANGE

- What are we doing all this SSE stuff for?



# THE EAGER FRIENDLY MESSENGER

- Everyone is saying it, I thought that you ought to know



# **SUCCESS HAS MANY FRIENDS.....**

- That was a great event we should run it every year

**JUMP ON THE  
BANDWAGON!**

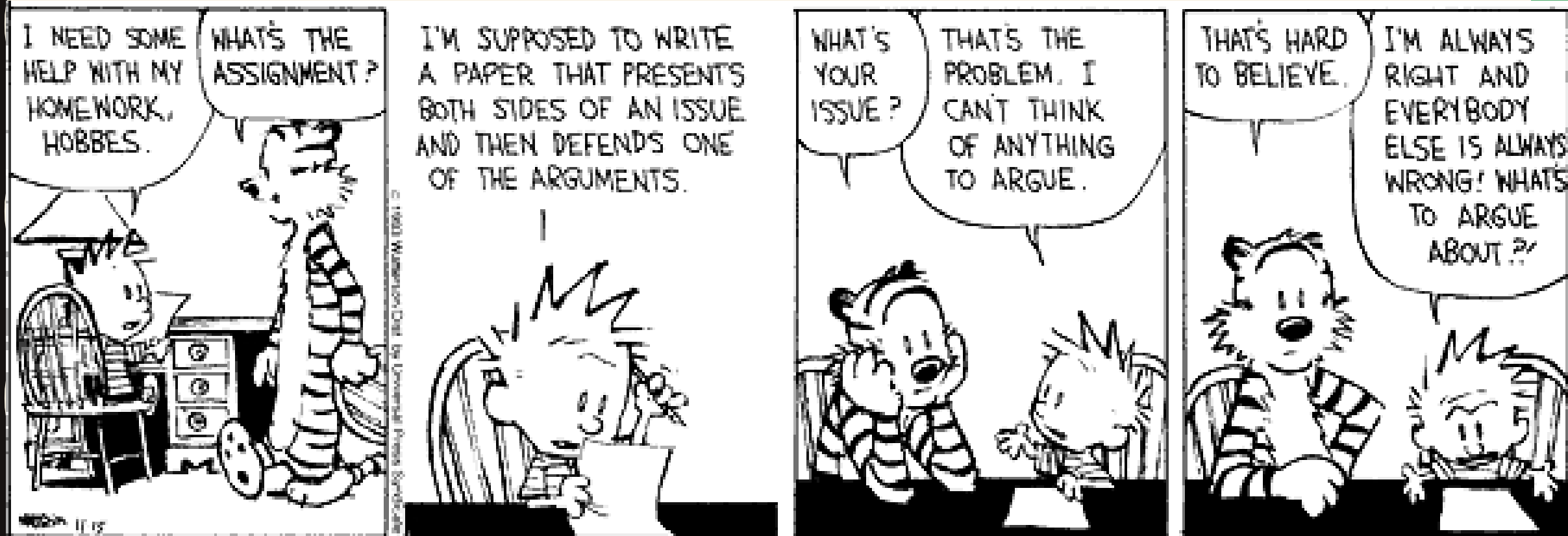
# MAMMY AND DADDY'S LITTLE ANGEL

- We never had a problem with him in primary school



# THE ISSUE IS NOT WITH MY CHILD....

- He/she has a personality clash with my son/daughter



# HOW GULLIBLE ARE YOU!!

- He goes up to his room every night to study

When Your Parents Go And Tell you to study for a Hour.

30 minutes: Watching YouTube

14 minutes: Watching T.V.

10 minutes: Making Quotes

5 minutes: Fooling Around

1 minute: Studying

# MINIMISE ONE'S OWN ACTIONS AND MAXIMISE THE OTHER PERSON'S CULPABILITY

- We were only messing





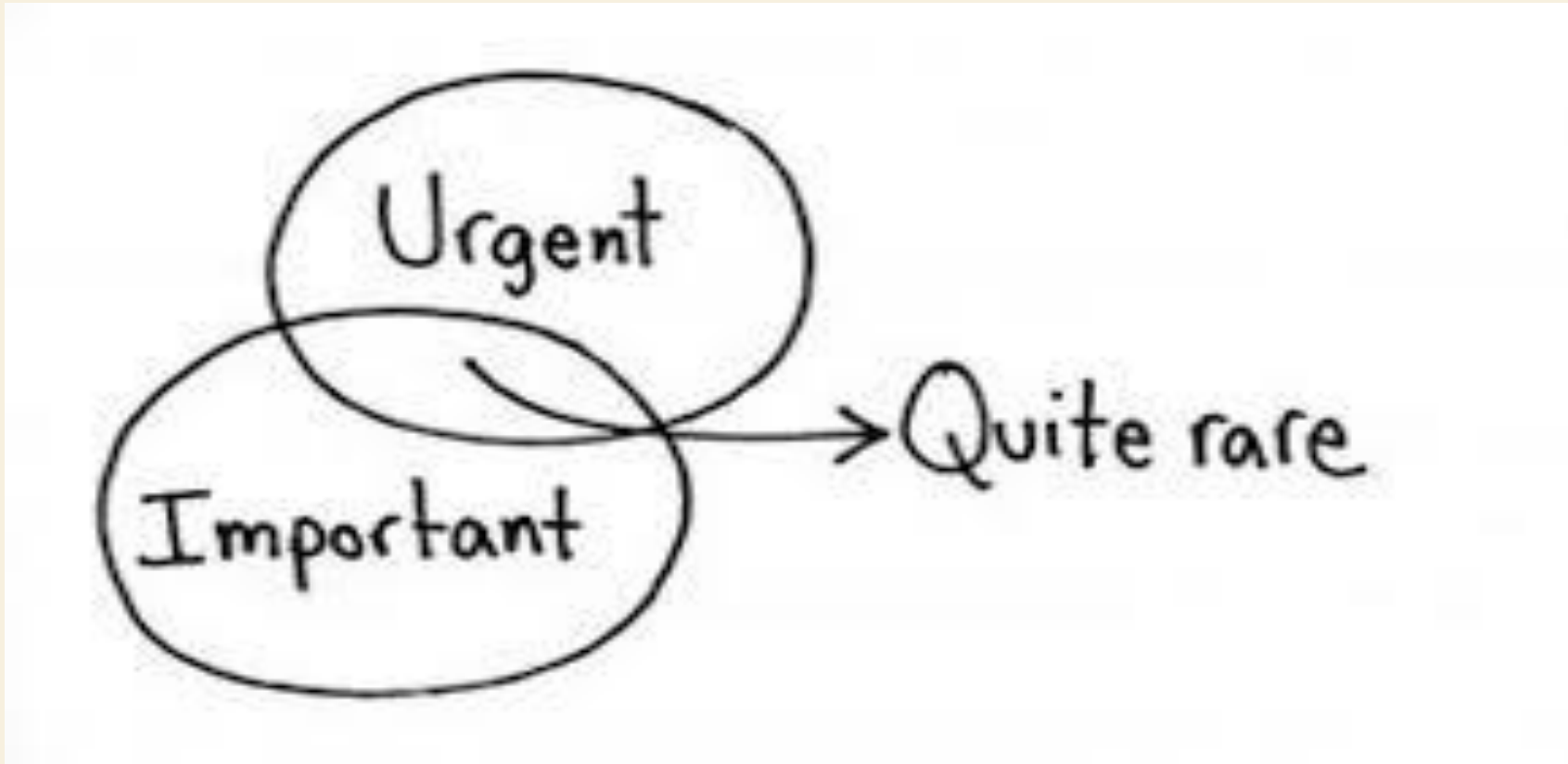
# **DO YOU REALLY THINK THAT YOU'RE IN CHARGE...**

- I'm going to write to the Board

**Tell me  
I can't, then  
watch me  
work twice  
as hard to  
prove you  
wrong.**

# ONE WAY TRAFFIC?

- URGENT Please complete and return



# ONE THAT YOU DON'T HEAR THAT OFTEN

Thank You, well done!



# MAR FHOCAIL SCOIR

- Senior leaders require safe psychological space/time for developmental meetings
- Dedicated uninterrupted time to focus on reflection
  - In practise
  - Of practise
  - On idiosyncratic practises
  
  - Use the LAOS framework as a benchmark, a guide for reflection
  - Track SSE as a process offered to support change
  
  - Listen for understanding and not for responding