



“Creating a Thriving Staff Culture for Sustainability”

Kathy Minardi

Definitions

Thrive... to grow vigorously; to flourish; to develop in a healthy way.

Culture... Latin “culture” means “care.” The values, beliefs and attitudes that are cared about, shared in common, and embraced by a group of people.

Creating a healthy, growing Montessori staff community that shares the same beliefs, values and attitudes about how they interact and behave together so that they can positively empower their work and their school successfully.

As Montessori School leaders, we must guide our staff so that the culture we want will happen. What is a model of culture for a Montessori that is optimal?



The model I want to share with you comes from Harvard University's Robert Kegan.

It is called "An Everyone Culture."

It is also a great book: "An Everyone Culture" by Dr. Robert Kegan

An Everyone Culture is a
deliberately developmental
workplace ~ or a deliberately
developmental school (DDS)

When a school is a DDS that means the leader inspires everyone in the school to continue to grow and develop~

The Children
The Staff
The Leader
The Parents

Everyone keeps on Learning!



The Leader...

Builds Safety

The Leader...

Shares vulnerability

listening

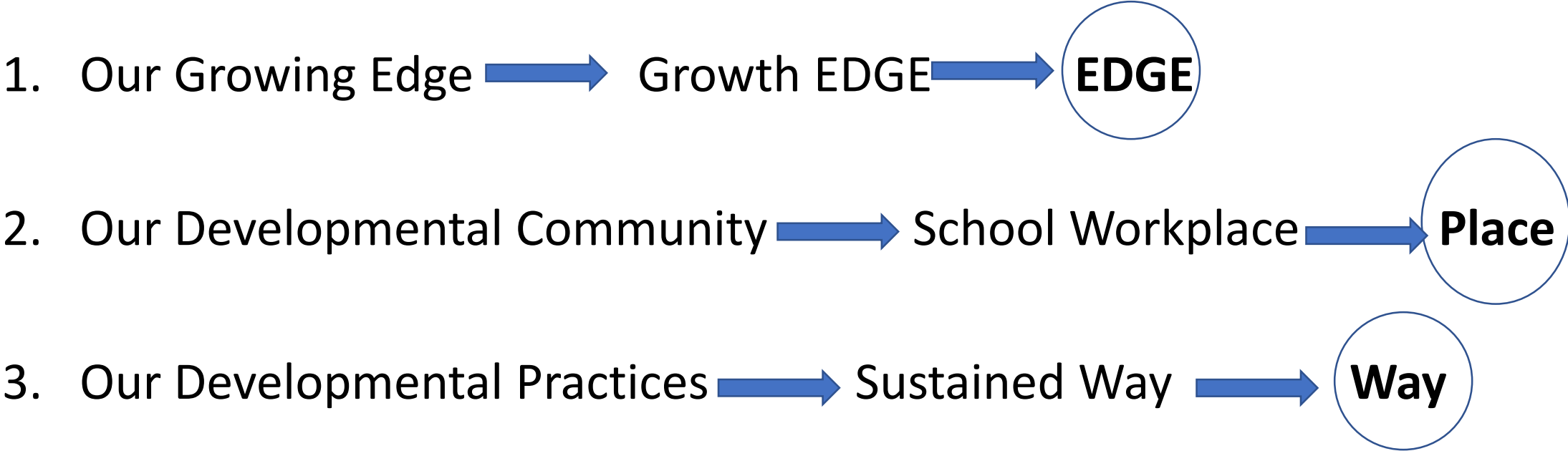
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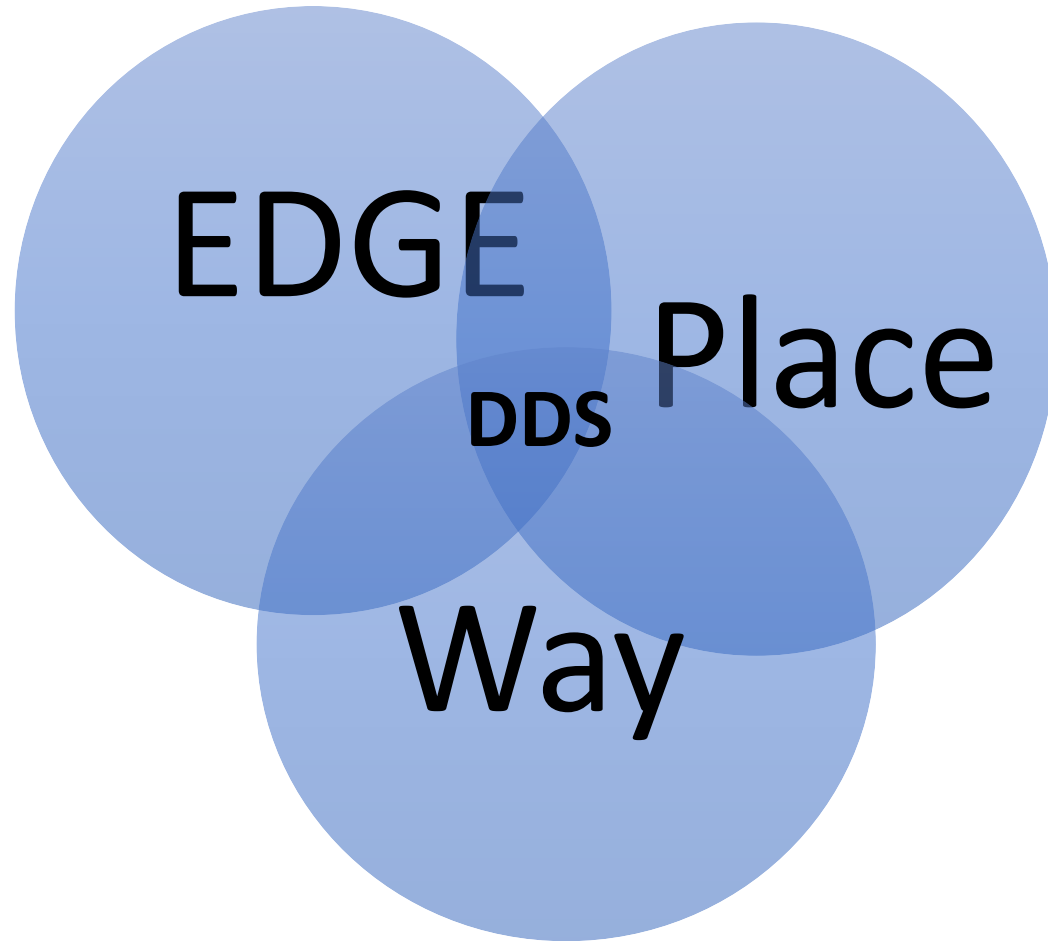
contributing personally

The Leader...

Establishes the purpose/the mission of the school clearly.

The Deliberately Developmental School has 3 dimensions that mutually reinforce each other

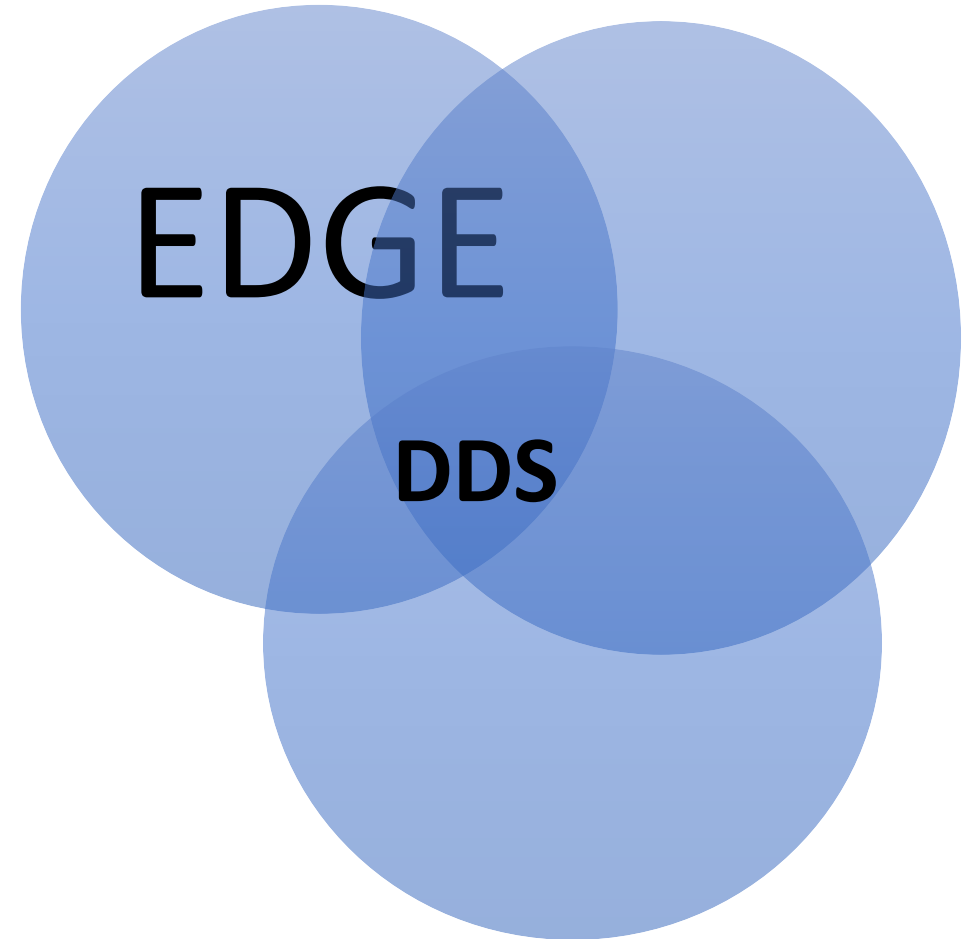




EDGE: Growth Mindset

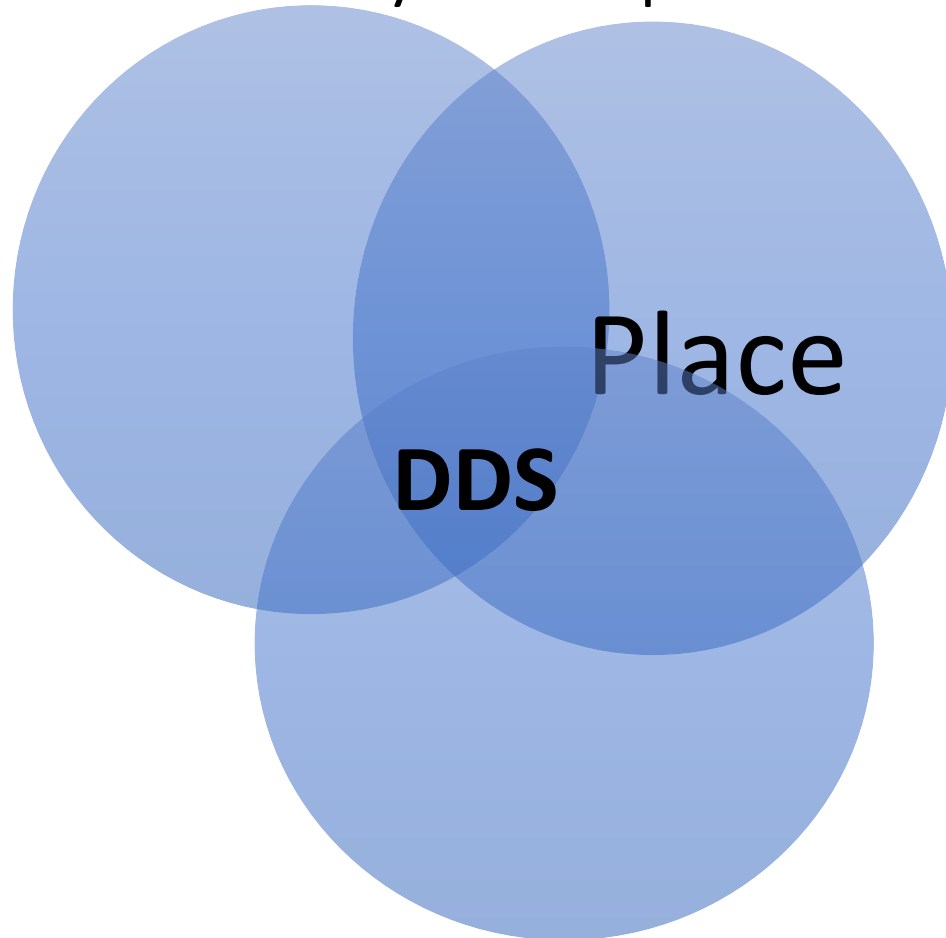
- Adults can grow.
- Error is opportunity.
- Working on development is challenging and is anchored by sustained practices.

“Growth Edge”



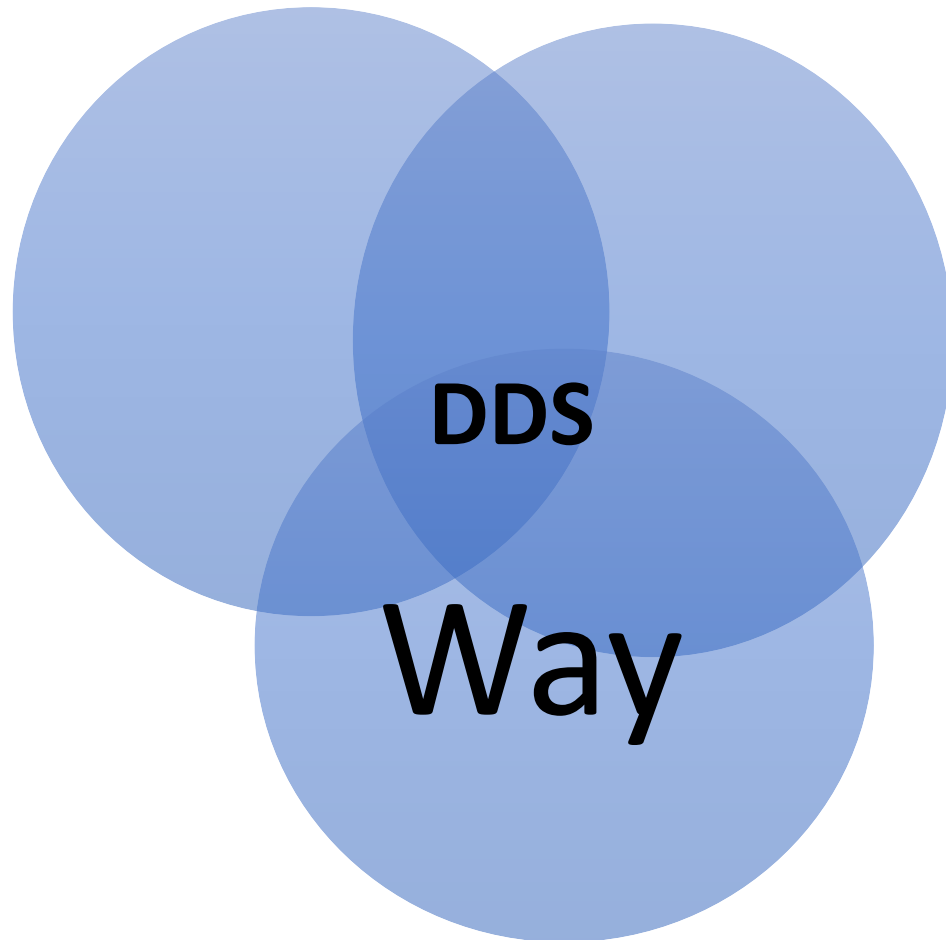
Place:

Working on our development requires shared vulnerability in a trustworthy workplace.



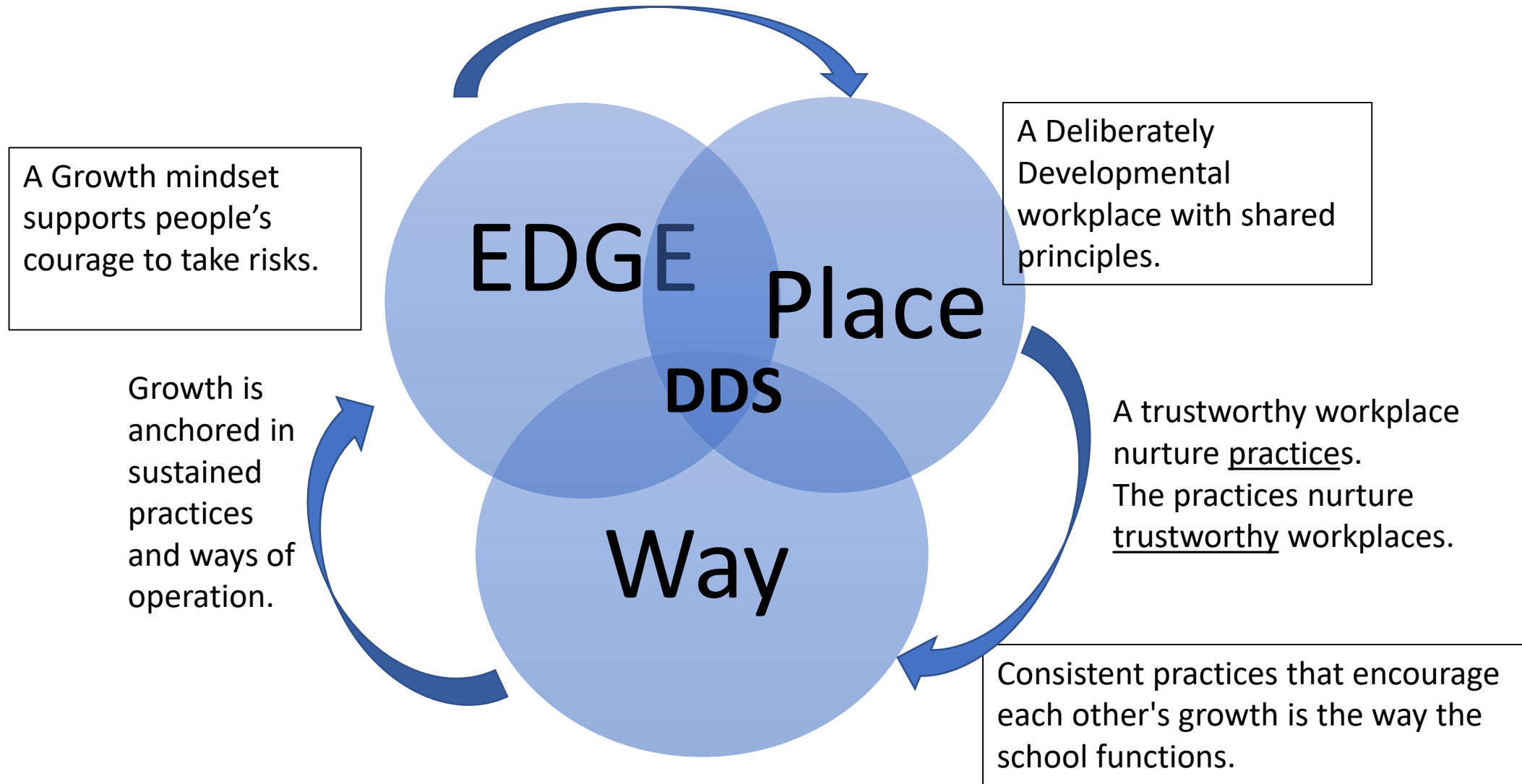
- An “Everyone” developmental workplace shares the same principles and practices of being trustworthy.

Way:



- Consistent practices that encourage each others growth are the way the school functions.

The Everyone Culture



A Mutually Reinforcing Culture

EDGE-

Orientation to the Growth Edge

Adults can grow.

The School is a place that cares about the growth of the people who do the work.

Error is an opportunity to learn and improve in a trustworthy workplace.

The school operates from developmental principles:

- Freedom and responsibility
- Educating for human potential
- Evolutionary purpose

Way- Consistent principles and tools for development

How meetings are structured.

How performance is monitored and discussed.

How people talk to one another about their Montessori practice in the classroom, or their work in the school.

Settings for coaching for growth and reflection.

Agreements for how people will interact to encourage a trustworthy culture, co-created.

Mind the gaps:

- What we do and what we say
- What we feel and what we say
- What we say together and when triangled

Place- the Montessori School workplace as a trustworthy community

A trustworthy workplace can have a positive impact on individuals growth if they are:

- Deeply valued
- Held accountable

Engage in real and sustained dialogue.

The DDS is a place where “everyone” is treated this way. The leadership is not above the staff. They are working hard to develop and share their authenticity and vulnerability as well. They walk their talk.

Development needs support. It is hard to do it alone.

Place-
continued...

In the community workplace in a Montessori school everyone is responsible to build and nourish the culture i.e. the shared values and beliefs.

A Montessori Deliberately Developmental workplace is more than the sum of its parts.

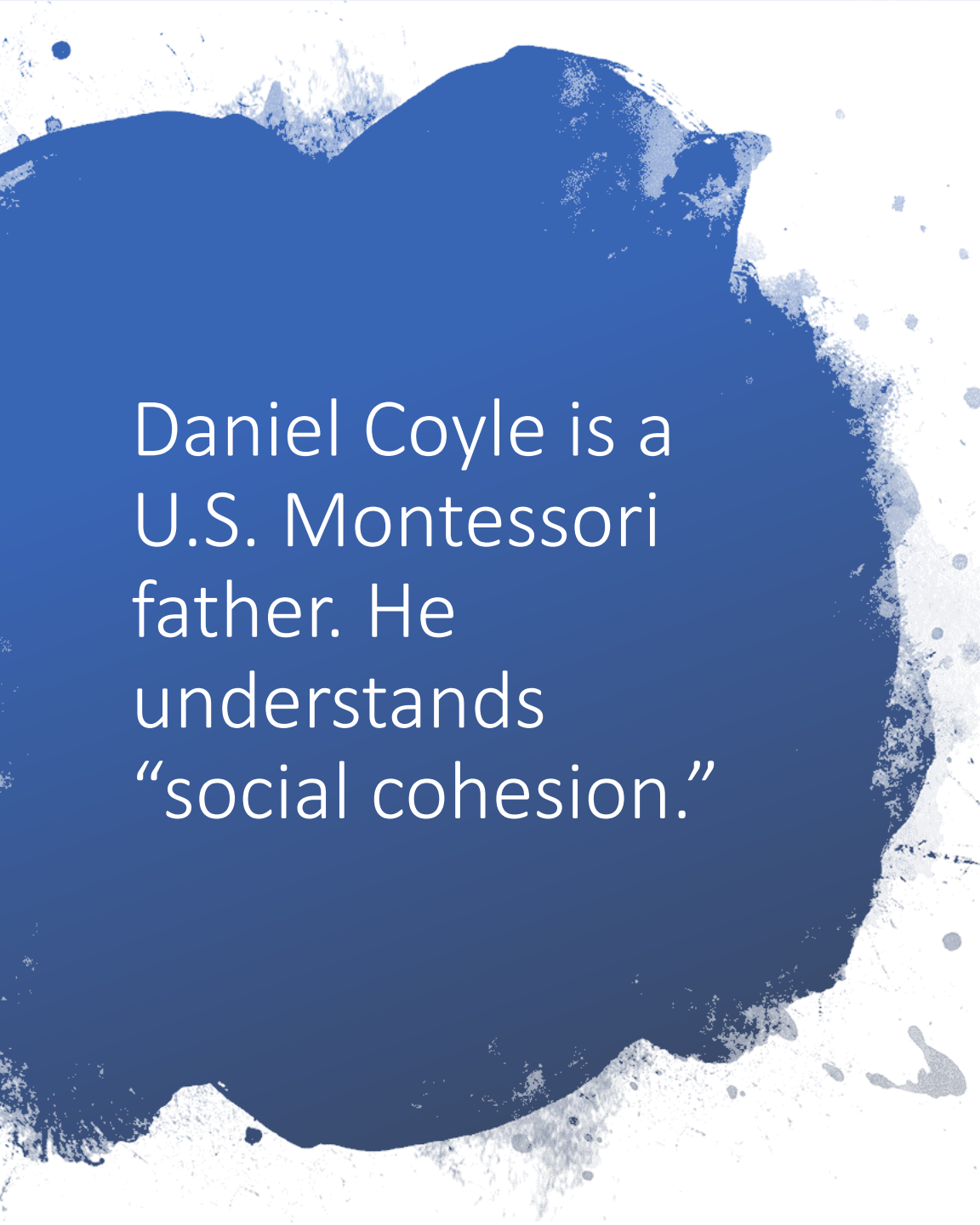
Stories...

Let's share

Where do we begin?

We begin with our self.

“I begin with me.”



Daniel Coyle is a
U.S. Montessori
father. He
understands
“social cohesion.”

He wrote:

“The Culture Code-The Secrets of Highly
Successful Groups.”

He talks about how to build safety. He explains that even before language we use “belonging cues,” that allow us to feel safe.

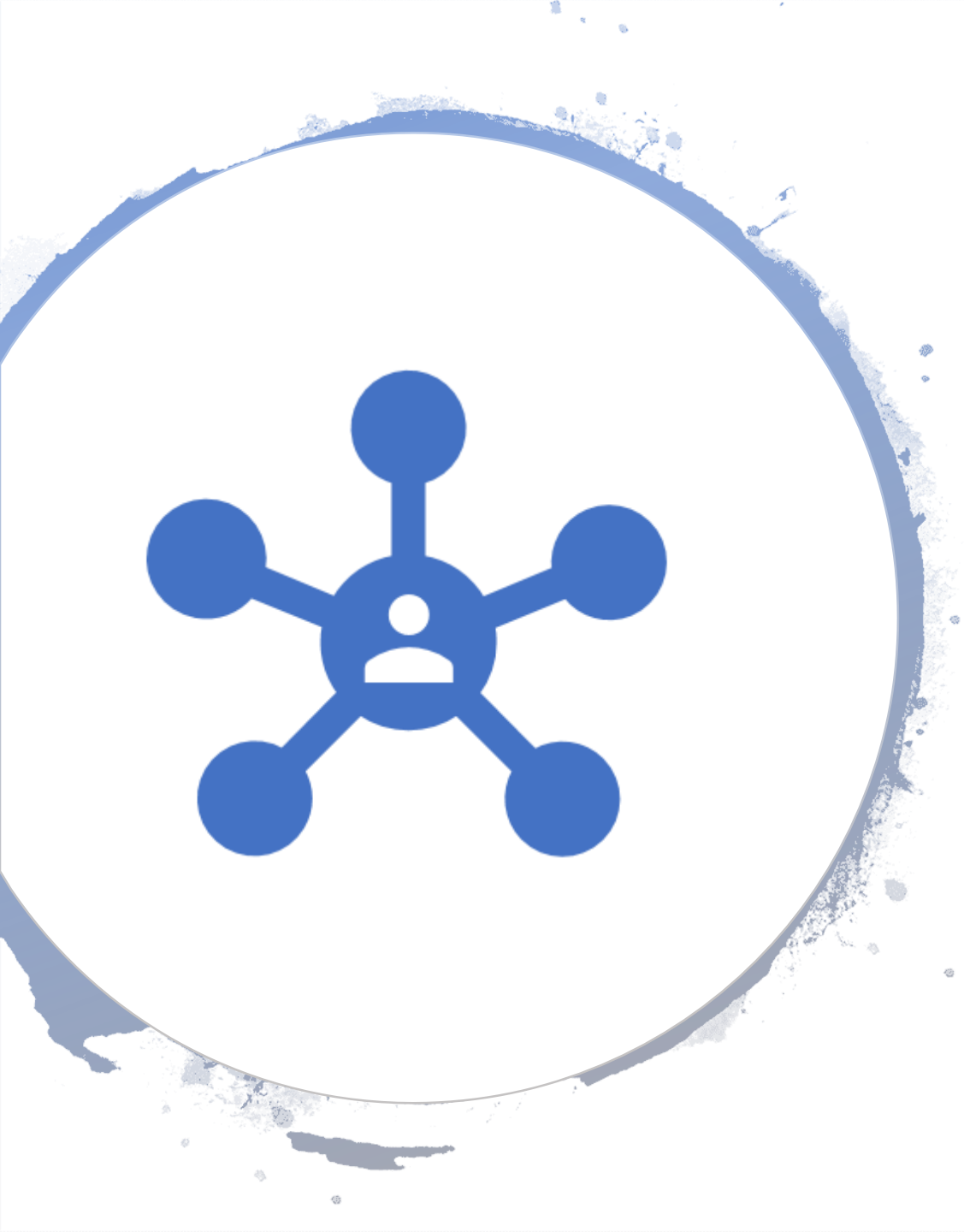
- Eye contact
- Proximity
- Energy
- Turn taking
- Attention
- Body language
- Voice pitch

Am I safe here?



“We have a place in our brain that’s worried about what people think of us, especially higher-ups. As far as our (unconscious) brain is concerned, if our social community rejects us, we could die. Given that our sense of danger is so natured and automatic, a workplace has to do some very special things to overcome this trigger.”

-Amy Edmondson



We are built to require lots of these belonging cues in order to overcome our fearful unconscious brain.

As leaders, then, we must act intentionally over and over repeatedly to build trust and safety.

“We are safe and connected.”

“The Vulnerability Loop is a shared exchange of openness, the most basic building blocks of cooperation and trust.”

-The Cultured Code

Two Questions

The leader must be vulnerable first and often!

Aim for Candor; not brutal honesty.

What went well/even better if... WWW/EBI

Creating Cooperation with Individuals

“The most important moments in a conversation happen when one person is actively, intently listening.”

Listening accelerates relationships.

High Purpose Culture-

The school leader shares often

“Here is where we are now.”

“Here is where we want to go. “

Our Work~

”An education capable of saving humanity is no small undertaking: it involves the spiritual development of humans, the enhancement of their value as an individual, and the preparation of young people to understand the times in which they live.

-Maria Montessori
Education and Peace