Mindful and Wisdom-Led Leadership: Mapping the Inner Terrain of Leadership

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In this conceptual article, the author describes the importance for school leaders of paying attention to their inner terrain of leadership through reflective opportunities to gain self-knowledge and build moral integrity. Mindful and wisdom-led leadership are suggested as helpful theories for new ways of thinking about self as a starting point for leadership development. The author recommends further research on how school leaders benefit from professional development opportunities with mentors and colleagues that prioritise deep, personal reflections on the work of school leadership.

Keywords: mindful leadership, wisdom-led leadership, self-knowledge, leadership development

When I was a university student I traveled through Britain and was fascinated by the signs in the underground metro to *mind the gap*. This phrase was spray-painted everywhere. I remember thinking that perhaps the message was more than just a reminder to step over the space between the platform of the metro and the tracks for the train. Perhaps the message was a reminder to pay attention to the space itself. I continue to wonder about this message, and use it now to think about the gap between who leaders think they are, what they already know, and how they carry out their work in schools. I wonder about the important learning that may be gained from paying attention to the interior terrain of the leader, learning that can come from minding that gap.

Thinking back to my time as a traveler and wondering about the meaning within this message painted on all the walls of the underground system, I recall a sense of delight at finding new places to visit, but also a wariness of getting lost, of possibly forgetting how to get home when I decided that I had had enough of seeing new places, faces, and spaces. As an educational researcher, I notice that the move to new theoretical places and spaces can also be a hesitant one. We feel safe and protected in our familiar world, and few of us leave for too long or venture too far away from our theoretical home

bases. In her writing on organizational change, Margaret Wheatley (2012) suggested that what often keeps change from happening is our relentless need to follow a map that we think is leading us to where we want to be going. She urged us to admit that we may be lost, and that the maps that we are using may be for a time and place that no longer fit where we now want to go. She suggested we let go of the safety of our old maps so we may start to see where we are and who we are in a more curious, open, and honest way.

In this article, I take on the challenge of minding the gap between theory and practice by paying attention to the 'meaning-making space' between them–the self of the leader. I suggest that paying attention to who we are, what we know and do, and how our beliefs and ideas about leadership align with our actions, is an under-explored, and yet important terrain for learning about leadership. I offer two theories that might be useful for guiding leaders to map the inner terrain of leadership, mindful leadership and wisdom-led leadership. Both of these theories prioritise deep reflection on self as a starting point for leadership. These leadership theories offer new ways of reflecting on leadership, and emphasise the importance of paying attention to who leaders think they are and the ways they see themselves enacting their role as a school leader.

Theories of mindful leadership are attention-focused, meaning that individuals use various practices to pay attention in new ways to their reactions and responses to become more present, grounded, and focused (Marturano, 2014). The benefits of a more mindful approach to leadership are felt by the individual, as they are better able to respond in healthy ways to stress, conflict, decision-making, and other aspects of their work. Mindful leadership also tends to result in improved relationships and connections with others at work (Brown & Olson, 2015; Ehrlich, 2017). Wisdom-led leadership focuses on

how leaders attune to the moral purpose that emerges from deep reflection of self in relation to others, knowing that there is no real separation between who we are, what we do, and the outcomes that result (Branson, 2009). Reflective knowledge gained from paying attention to the influences on and between values, beliefs, and practices serves as a tool for guiding leaders toward meaningful inner change aligned with outward leadership practices (Branson, 2009).

In this conceptual article, I suggest that the theories of mindful leadership and wisdom-led leadership offer knowledge and practices for guiding leaders to explore the inner terrain of leadership, and that this inner terrain is an essential learning ground, an opportunity to mind the potential gap between knowing, being, and doing as an educational leader. Additionally, I suggest that these two theories of leadership offer insights on the importance of knowing self as essential for building relationships at work. As leaders learn to become more aware, open, and present in their work they tend to engage with more curiosity, compassion, and acceptance with others (Brown & Olson, 2015; Marturano, 2014), and learn to lead from a sense of moral purpose that helps them become more relationally-adept leaders (Branson, 2009).

Mindful leadership and wisdom-led leadership encourage attention to the self as the starting point for understanding leadership, suggesting that leadership requires an exploration of the inner landscape of the leader to more clearly see the relationships between beliefs, values, thoughts, feelings, and actions. I begin with a brief overview of these two theories, and then discuss how we might use these theories to better support and encourage school administrators to regularly engage in personal reflection,

individually and with their colleagues, as ongoing professional learning for improving their leadership.

Mindfulness in Education: A Rapidly Expanding Terrain

The concept of mindfulness has gained attention and traction in health, business, and education as research shows the benefits of mindfulness-based practices for decreasing stress and increasing positive traits and habits for quality of life (Good et al., 2016; Kabat-Zinn, 2003; Schonert-Reichl & Lawlor, 2010). From an Eastern perspective, mindfulness can be understood as "the awareness that emerges through paying attention on purpose, . . . to the unfolding of experience moment by moment" (Kabat-Zinn, 2003, p. 14) through contemplative techniques and practices, such as meditation. Research shows benefits of mindfulness programs and practices used in classrooms such as, improving memory, increasing ability to concentrate, improving attention to regulate emotion, as well as growing empathy and compassion (Greenberg et al., 2003; Jennings & Greenberg, 2009; Meikeljohn et al., 2012; Schonert-Reichl & Lawlor, 2010). Mindfulness programs tend to emphasise meditation and breath practices in combination with a focus on social-emotional learning.

In general, mindfulness can be described as bringing full attention to the present moment (Marturano, 2014), often accomplished through contemplative connections between mind, body, and spirit (Rodgers & Raider-Roth, 2006; Newmark, Krahnke & Seaton, 2013). This synergy between mental, emotional, and physical states offers benefits such as reduced stress, improved cognition, and an opportunity to make more considered and thoughtful decisions from this sense of being fully present (Brown & Ryan, 2003). A mindfulness stance can also contribute to individuals taking more risks in

their learning, and making discoveries about themselves, rather than making decisions automatically based on previous experience (Rodgers & Raider-Roth, 2006). In other words, if an individual's complete attention is focused and present, they are more able to be fully aware of their emotions, and are better able to control and focus their concentration on the task at hand (Newmark et al., 2013). When an individual makes a conscious effort to live in the present moment there are benefits of improved emotional self-regulation and flexibility within situations to make good decisions that lead to further success in life (Meiklejohn et al., 2012).

A hallmark of mindfulness practices is a sense of decentering (Brown, 2007) that comes as individuals notice their thoughts, feelings, and any external stimuli as they are, without judgment, without trying to making meaning from the event or their interpretations of the event. This practice of paying attention, on-purpose, without judgment (Kabat-Zinn, 2003) creates a sense of cognitive and emotional space, or distance, from the experience and allows for the individual to respond to the stimulus as it is, without the added layer of thoughts, feelings, memories, and interpretations that often influence behaviours (Good et al., 2016). Further, Good et al. (2016) explain: "Importantly, mindfulness is not antithetical to evaluation or judgment. Rather, in the state of alert attentiveness that characterizes mindfulness, evaluations, judgments, and associated memories can be closely attended to by a mind that is aware of what is happening moment to moment" (p.117). Paradoxically perhaps, mindfulness practitioners suggest that focusing attention on the mind through practicing mindfulness can result in individuals moving beyond their mind, allowing them to more fully connect with their hearts and spirits in their everyday life (Kabat-Zinn, 2003).

Positive attributes of mindfulness, described as 'presence,' are evident in literature on the benefits of mindfulness in the workplace (Glomb, Duffy, Bono, & Yang, 2011), where most research tends to show that training the mind through mindfulness practices and programs aimed at focusing attention improves cognition, experiences of emotion, self-regulation of behaviour, and decreases stress responses (Good et al., 2016). Improved self-regulation, decrease in negative reactions to workplace events, and improved response to stress leading to improved performance and better connections with others at work are evident benefits in the mindful leadership literature (Erhlich, 2017; Gonzalez, 2012; Marturano, 2014).

Much of the current writing and research on mindful leadership reflects an Eastern philosophical perspective of mindfulness focusing on meditation, or mindful pauses, linked with enhancing and/or improving performance and social-emotional aspects of leaders' work (Marturano, 2014; Gonzalez, 2012). These mindful leadership models tend to be based on mindfulness practices for attending to the present moment in a focused way, as a means of tapping into greater creativity, compassion, and other positive capacities that help to regulate emotion and enable greater connectivity with others (Brown & Olson, 205; Gonzalez, 2012; Marturano, 2014). The move toward developing mindful leadership in organisations has been prompted, in part, by the pervasiveness of the rapid pace and intensity of change in society, reflected in the workplace where, "we are moving faster, communicating more, and leveraging technology more extensively in almost every role" (Erhlich, 2017, p. 233). Mindfulness training is increasingly included as a pragmatic approach to helping employees and leaders improve their performance and their relationships at work in what can seem a

frenetic workday of multi-tasking the various demands, interruptions, and the shifts and changes that come their way that often outside of their control. Ehrlich (2017) found that mindfulness can provide a buffer, or a counter balance, against stress and frustration that often occurs as employees feel overwhelmed and out of control due to the pace and intensity of their workplace demands. This sense of work intensification is a frustrating reality for school administrators who often feel high levels of stress resulting from increasing complexity and volume of their work (Pollock, Wang & Hauseman, 2015). Pollock et al. (2015) found that increased expectations at work in terms of the amount of work, and the intensified time frame within which they were expected to complete the number of tasks for which they are responsible, can be overwhelming for many principals. Of note was the stress and frustration that can result from the constant interruptions during their work due to emails and texts; this constant electronic connection to work means that principals often feel that they never get a break, or reprieve, from their work (Pollock et al., 2015).

Not surprisingly, the benefits of mindfulness practices—improved responsiveness (rather than reactiveness); decreased stress and anxiety; improvement in overall health; and improved relationships (MacKenzie, 2015)—are of interest to those working at all levels of an organisation, but certainly for those in leadership positions. Through learning to focus attention on one moment of experience at a time (an object, a mantra, breath), and learning to bring attention back to that experience when the attention wanders, leaders can develop their ability to direct their mind as they learn to focus their attention (Ehrlich, 2017). While mindfulness may be though of as a set of techniques to access greater levels of focused attention, Ehrlich (2017) cautions that “mindfulness is not just

about being concentrated in the present. It is about an attitude of openness and acceptance towards your experience ” (p. 34). Cultivating this attitude of mindfulness in their work through regular practices, mindful leaders can improve and grow more their inner capacities for seeking greater awareness, clarity, and connection, first with self and then with others (Marturano, 2014). This improved self-awareness often means leaders can learn to focus on what matters most to them and their staff, rather than to be merely reacting to the various stimuli and phenomena that seem to be incessantly thrown at them in their work world (Erlich, 2017). Through focusing more clearly, calmly, and with openness and acceptance, mindful leaders can develop improved relationships with others, as they learn to see how they are influencing others around them, and to see the totality of their work through this mindfulness stance. In these ways, mindful leadership can result in improved capacity for guiding change, one of the most important aspects or qualities of leadership (Brown & Olson, 2015; Gonzalez, 2012; Marturano, 2014). However, Ehrlich reminds that the work of leadership is one of relationships, and so, “just showing up (being fully present) is insufficient for connection. To build strong relationships you need additional skills such as listening and empathy” (p. 236). Therefore, mindful leadership presupposes cultivating self-awareness in service of improving connections with others, and this requires ongoing practice to improve the various capacities needed to work well with others.

Similar to mindful leadership, Bill George (2003) developed a model of authentic leadership that offers insights into the importance of self-awareness, of knowing one’s own strengths and personal talents, of offering these personal gifts to others through work, and encouraging employees and other business leaders to do the same. This self-

awareness can be enhanced through meditation and reflections on social-emotional learning, and other embodied, experiential practices that help the leader to pay attention to mind, body, emotions, and spirit, where this last means awareness of purpose, values, and beliefs about what makes a life meaningful (Ehrlich, 2017, p. 236). Ultimately, self-awareness enables leaders to become aware of when and how they are leading from a space of authenticity, when their values, beliefs, and purposes align with their actions. Gaining deeper awareness of self through experiential means of breath practices, meditation, and other contemplative techniques reflects a more Eastern, holistic, approach to leadership development.

A more Western perspective of mindfulness emerged, in part, from the work of social psychologist, Ellen Langer (1989, 1993, 1997). From her research on attention and learning, Langer determined that mindfulness is the process of actively observing new things, which leads to new decision-making, attention to variables, re-categorising new information, and paying attention to context and multiple perspectives (Langer, 1989; 1993, 1997; Langer & Moldoveanu, 2000a). According to Langer mindfulness leads to enhanced creativity, social performance, and cognitive benefits such as improved memory and decision-making. By moving away from teaching facts as unconditional accounts to be memorised, a mindless approach to learning, teachers can create mindful learning conditions for students to learn to notice multiple ways of knowing, thinking, and responding, modeling how to seek out novelty within known experiences. From this mindfulness stance, teachers provide students with opportunities to question their assumptions, actively seek out new knowledge, find many possible answers for problems,

and learn to see their perceptions of the world from a more open, curious, and critical thinking lens (Langer, 1997; Langer & Moldoveanu, 2000b; Lieberman & Langer, 1997).

Langer's work has been adapted for use in organizations (Weick & Sutcliffe, 2007) and in schools (Hoy, 2003). School mindfulness is understood as the extent to which teachers and administrators in a school carefully and regularly look for problems, prevent problems from becoming crises, are reluctant to oversimplify events, focus on teaching and learning, refer to expertise to gain insights into problems, and are resilient to problems (Hoy, 2003). Based on the assumption that the school environment is so full of the unexpected, Hoy (2003) argued that leaders cannot rely on routine practices and techniques and need a mindfulness stance to ensure a level of adaptivity to meet the increasingly complex environments within which they work. School mindfulness can be measured based on levels of trust, openness, flexibility, cooperation, and organizational learning. Hoy (2003) suggested that a mindful approach to leadership can cultivate a sense of freedom from the fear of failing to allow for more creative and adaptive responses to both unexpected and routine organizational situations.

As I have described, the current research and writing on mindful leadership assumes that leaders can learn to shift their states of mind and ways of being. This shift can happen through an Eastern approach of contemplative practices and reflection on thoughts, emotions, beliefs, and actions to attune more clearly, calmly, and with acceptance to the present moment and to those with whom they work. Mindful leadership can also be understood from a more Western, cognitive approach of learning to notice novelty, complexity, and multiple perspectives; moving away from mindlessly reacting to information and events and learning to see and think in more open, creative, complex

ways. In the next section, I describe a second way of thinking about leadership in schools, 'leadership as self-awareness,' where wisdom-led leadership emerges as leaders reflect on who they are and their ways of being (Branson, 2009). The theory of wisdom-led leadership connects ideas about mindful self-awareness and moral purpose through accessing deep, personal, reflective knowledge.

Leadership as Self-awareness: Exploring the Deep, Inner Terrain

Reflective practice is essential for personal professional growth (Richards, 2009), and intentional and sustained focus on acquiring self-knowledge through reflection is at the heart of wisdom-led leadership (Branson, 2009). The idea of paying attention on purpose, or a sustained focus, resonates with notions of mindfulness, and is an essential practice for educational leaders seeking to deepen their own learning about who they are, how they relate to others, and how they wish to contribute to shaping their world. The concept of a reflective practitioner is not new, but often this reflection is focused on outside behaviours with the intention of reflecting on the feelings and emotions the practitioner has about these behaviours, and then gaining an understanding of the motivations for these behaviours. In his theory of wisdom-led leadership, Branson (2009) suggests that this kind of outside-in reflection will not lead to deep changes in personal behaviours, because it does not get at the root of who we are or how we feel about ourselves. He argues that it is only when we gain a deep understanding of our self that we are able to make the necessary shifts in consciousness toward meaningful changes in behaviours. Gaining this kind of 'reflective knowledge' about self is difficult, takes time, and often needs to be facilitated by a mentor who has attained a deep level of self-knowledge (Branson, 2009). Achieving a deep level of mindful self-awareness ought to

be the starting point for leadership development, and has the potential to move leaders toward a more purpose-driven leadership emerging from a deep and embodied awareness of the heart, body, and mind as interconnected and interdependent with all aspects of life, a holistic view of the systems within which educational leaders make their way (Branson, 2009).

Understanding leaders' inner motivations and personal experiences as an important element of leadership development is not in itself a new perspective in leadership theory. However, Branson's exploration of consciousness and the increased consideration for self-awareness as an essential aspect of moral integrity in leadership is a new perspective, one that resonates with ideas of mindful leadership and mindfulness in education. In explaining the complexity and challenge of gaining an understanding of consciousness in his theory of wisdom-led leadership, Branson uses what he calls a "different metaphysical framework" for exploring consciousness by referring to the "ontology of radical naturalism and the epistemology of embodied awareness" (Branson, 2009, p. 55).

Branson frames the pursuit of understanding consciousness within an ontological assumption of radical naturalism, developed by deQuincy (2002) and others, stating that "within our human experience, there is no separation between matter and mind, our body and our consciousness, as they are each composed from one and the same nature" (Branson, 2009, p. 60). Underpinning this holistic assumption of the view of an interconnected and interdependent world is the belief that process, the continual movement of creation, is central to understanding how we know the world. This understanding pushes the limits of understanding beyond the long-standing arguments for

separation of mind, body, materialism, nature, and other matter in how we understand our reality, toward an integrative, dynamic, and more expansive understanding about how we come to know our world through all our experiences as both subject and object within a continual creation process (Branson, 2009, p. 62). From this starting point, Branson (2009) argues that an epistemological stance of embodied awareness assumes that "knowledge is awareness.…it emerges from the amalgamation and assimilation of both the concrete, factual, objective, certain, and impersonal data and the emotional, intuitive, subjective, creative, and personal data that arise within the body during a moment of experience" (p. 65). Given this epistemological stance, consciousness can be understood as the medium through which we embody, and from which we enact, our knowledge. As such, gaining deep, reflective knowledge through a considered awareness of consciousness plays a central role in developing and sustaining wisdom-led leadership. Branson explains:

> The person becomes a wisdom-led leader in order to act like a wisdom-led leader. In order to become wisdom-led leaders, leaders, first, examine their being, their essence, and their consciousness. Leaders aspiring to be more wisdom-led must strive to expand their considered awareness and to extend their contemplated consciousness. Wisdom-led leadership depends on the clarity and accuracy of the voice of their consciousness and their willingness to authentically follow its advice. Through consciousness examining itself, the leader's authenticity can be reinforced. Reinforced authenticity reinvigorates inner freedom and, ultimately, strengthens moral integrity. Having an enduring and resolute commitment to

> maintaining their moral integrity means that leaders' actions will always be in the best interests of others. Their leadership will be wisdom-led. (p. 56)

Through rigorous and ongoing self-examination at a level of deep consciousness, wisdom-led leaders are able to sustain a considered awareness of their moral integrity, an authenticity that emanates from an ongoing reflective examination of alignment of values, beliefs, and actions carried out in the best interest of others. Branson describes embodied awareness of consciousness as a guide for leaders, but suggests:

> guidance is not in the form of knowing how to perform leadership behaviours better. Rather, this guidance comes in the form of becoming more aware of the limitations, the misunderstandings, the misconceptions, and the weaknesses in one's own consciousness. It is by gaining a more informed, a more aware, a more considered, and a more comprehensive consciousness that wisdom is augmented and leadership becomes more fitting. (2009, p. 57)

Improving leadership happens through gaining reflective knowledge about self, and working with a mentor, or other colleagues who have experience inquiring into the inner terrain of leadership, to uncover the gaps that may exist between who the leaders thinks they are, how they are carrying out their work with others, what influences are shaping this work, and the resulting outcomes for others. As leaders notice and mend the gaps they move toward moral alignment. Gaining a deeper understanding of self in relation to others can be understood as the path of authentic learning, and coming to understand one's authenticity, one's true sense of self, is presumed to be an educator's moral responsibility (Higgins, 2011; Starratt, 2007). Branson's (2009) process of leadership development starts with self-reflective learning, and he argues that for today's leaders,

consciousness-raising, or increasing mindfulness, is not an option, but rather it is a necessity. He suggests "the paradox of attending more deeply to individual consciousness as a leader is that it is an essential practice for becoming effective in relation with others" (p. 114). In other words, leaders need to engage in processes of authentic learning where they come to see who they are in relation to the worlds within which they serve as a leader. Knowing self, at a deep level of consciousness, is essential to relational responsibilities within which leaders carry out their work, and so this knowing of self needs to be a primary consideration in terms of the moral purpose of leadership.

That educational leadership is a moral endeavour is not a new argument, however gaining awareness of moral integrity through inquiry into the inner terrain of a leader's consciousness provides new ways of thinking about leadership development for school leaders. For example, Branson (2009) argues that supporting and encouraging leaders to become aware of their consciousness is more important for engaging with others in effective leader-follower relationships than providing leaders with more rationally-based procedures to follow. Improving leadership as authentic professional learning guided by moral integrity is a process orientation, an ongoing and evolving journey to gain self-knowledge from an inside-out approach. Learning about self happens best in relation and in context, meaning that leaders need time and opportunity to reflect and connect with mentors and colleagues to think through what they are learning, noticing alignment (or not) between their beliefs and action, and determining how to proceed in ways that encourage more alignment. They also need to be supported to focus on the process of self-knowing as an important aspect of their leadership, rather than becoming distracted by the micro-components of managing the school organization (Branson, 2009). As

Langer (1989) reminded, "a preoccupation with outcome can make us mindless.…mindfulness [is] a process orientation" (p. 75). Mindful and wisdom-led leadership approaches do not deny the importance of strong technical competencies, of being able to attend to how to manage a school. Rather, self-aware leaders are able to see the wholeness of their leadership, to notice through attuning to mind, body, emotions, and spirit as they think about their leadership in service of others. They can notice when they are being pulled too far in one direction or the other, when they are pulled out of alignment and their values, beliefs, purposes are in tension with their actions. In other words, they are able to mind the gap.

Minding the Gap: Supporting Learning about the Inner Terrain

How do we support educational leaders to mind the gap, to engage in deep, reflective, process-oriented, authentic learning approaches centered on moral integrity? What might this look like in schools and how do principals develop the necessary individual and collective reflective capacities and practices? Branson (2009) suggested that wisdom-led leadership is focused on connecting and transcending through a deeper awareness and understanding of self in relation to others, and to the organization and systems in which leaders work. Attending to moral purpose shifts the focus of leadership beyond a behavioural approach of managing, beyond what Langer (1989) might refer to as the mindless approach of task completion.

Using research with educational leaders, Branson (2009) described the potential for attaining a level of wisdom-led leadership using structured self-reflection processes with school administrators guided by a capable mentor. Developing and learning from self-reflective processes takes time, trust, and compassion as leaders engage with their

colleagues in conversations that are very personal and sensitive. Establishing learning relationships for exploring the inner terrain of leadership requires time, care, and attention to be able to create learning spaces that are caring and safe enough for adult learners to take on the challenges of developing new ways of knowing and being (Drago-Severson, 2009).

Although the path to authenticity and self-awareness for leaders is challenging, and even daunting work, in research with school administrators, Woods, Woods and Cowie (2009) found that principals yearn for opportunities to engage in deep individual and collective reflection with their colleagues. However, Woods et al. (2009) noted that structural impediments, such as lack of time, scheduling conflicts, and lack of mentors inhibited participants' abilities to do so in an ongoing and meaningful way. In Woods et al.'s study (2009) the principals who reported the most satisfaction with engaging in deep professional learning were those who were able to participate in a leadership retreat opportunity. Similarly, Branson (2009) noted that "without specifically directed personal learning from their own daily working environment and leadership experiences, leaders might know what wisdom-led leadership is, but they won't know how to personally achieve it. The gaining of wisdom-led leadership is practiced, not taught" (p. 64). While there are programs designed to develop reflective practices and capacities in new school leaders (Richards, 2009), and increasing opportunities for mindfulness-based programs for educators offered through universities, teacher associations, and other providers, more research is needed to understand how to better support school leaders at all stages of their career to cultivate and sustain an ongoing, job-embedded, and meaningful practice of

deep personal reflection with mentors and colleagues as an important aspect of leadership development.

Thinking about leadership development as a process of gaining reflective self-knowledge requires new ways of supporting and encouraging leaders to learn practices for deep reflection, individually and in groups. Reflective practices can be developed in many forms, such as through meditation, journaling, or mindful movement, but are most effectively supported through facilitation by an experienced mentor, and with colleagues (Branson, 2009; Woods et al., 2009). Through mindful practices, school leaders begin to understand themselves as part of an interconnected system, and not only as a manager of a machine-like system. They learn to notice the ways they live out their leadership as an embodied awareness of their thoughts, feelings, beliefs, and actions (Ehrlich, 2017). Leaders need new maps to explore the inner terrain of leadership. They also need supports, resources, and commitments from their districts to ensure that the individual and collective opportunities for ongoing professional learning can become a reality for them. The promises of mindful and wisdom-led leadership, of inspiring personal and collective reflection toward more present, connected, creative, authentic, meaningful, and purpose-driven leadership requires focused and sustained attention at all levels of the school system. Supporting school leaders to nurture and sustain mindful approaches to leadership will require ongoing support for meaningful reflective practices that engage a deep, inside-out knowledge of self (Branson, 2009; Richards, 2009). Minding the gap of school leadership needs sustained and focused attention from those in all levels of the system.

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