

Foreword

While finishing Tom Sergiovanni's *Rethinking Leadership*, Second Edition, I found my eyes slowly canvassing the walls, the halls, and the reinforced structure of the building where I work. I thought of how great builders construct sustainable buildings that support people working together for generations to come. Tom does the same: He is a great education builder who constructs enduring mental space that challenges and welcomes educators to conceptualize and practice new possibilities.

His ideas are certainly not mainstream. I have witnessed firsthand the great unrest his ideas create among many school, district, state, and federal reformers. Tom's writings turn conventional management and organizational thinking topsy-turvy. His words enable readers to imagine a new world of schools, he substitutes moral community for leadership, he dismantles system theory, and he shows how hierarchical control is the antithesis of what is needed in schools for today and tomorrow. Tom writes that schools do not need heroic, charismatic, and take-charge leaders. Rather, schools, to be consistent with their purpose, need to be led by those who prefer not to lead, but instead wish to stimulate, support, and bring thoughtful actions among the young and old membership of the school.

Tom brings the concepts of dignity, respect, and purposeful learning to the core of thinking about education for all. He writes that such an education needs to be guided by a community of members who understand why we educate and therefore why we commit time and effort to work together to sustain a better future. In essence, it is not the *principal* of a school who sustains a good school, but the *principles* of education that allow followers and leaders to intermix roles and responsibilities to achieve what is needed for students.

No contemporary scholar has dug deeper into these issues of education, community, and leadership. I have read Tom's work ever since I was in my first principal position, and his writing continues to be a

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challenging friend to me. Tom continues to grow in his thinking about schools. He is the too-rare scholar-practitioner, head in the clouds of what can inform, feet on the ground in the day-to-day practices of schools. Tom's writings in this new and updated edition of *Rethinking Leadership: A Collection of Essays* continues to challenge us all: challenge us in how we lead our own lives, how we help prepare future leaders, and how we should keep purpose central to our decisions.

Tom is a builder of ideas built to last. Take this book with you on your own journey. Read this book carefully and refer back to it often. We all need to be reminded—over and over again—that education can work well only if we practice the belief that wise decisions are best made when leaders and followers are one and the same. This is an idea that has inspired many throughout history. Thankfully, we have the writings of Tom Sergiovanni to guide us on how such belief can become the practice of people.

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