



RESEARCH *for*

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**BETTER TEACHING**

Empowering  
Sustainable School  
Improvement  
Since 1979

# How To Build A Strong Adult Professional Culture (APC)

**Jon Saphier**



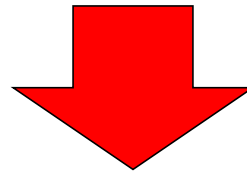
Research is clear and consistent that when Adult Professional Culture is strong, students do better.

Why do you think that is true?

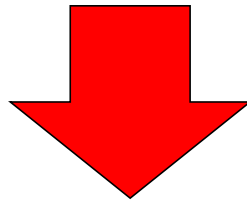
# Why Study Adult Professional Culture?



Strong adult professional culture



Increased teaching expertise (rapid & continuous)



Increased student achievement

# Why Study Adult Professional Culture?



- Increasing teaching expertise is the surest way to increase student achievement.
- Strengthening adult professional culture is the surest way to increase teaching expertise.
- A strong adult professional culture\* is what makes a school powerful at growing teaching expertise

\* called Human Capital and Social Capital in the current educational literature

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## If we want to :

... make our new reading program work

... make our PD sessions on anti-racism and cultural proficiency impact people's practice

... make our PLCs thrive

... make our data teams target instruction

... make our core values actually start to collapse the achievement gap

.....or whatever we want to accomplish.....





...we need to be deliberate and effective at building strong Adult Professional Culture (APC).

# Objectives



Be able to...

- ▶ Be motivated to assess and improve the culture of the unit you lead and the bigger units you are part of
- ▶ Have the resources to do so.

# Itinerary



- Why Study Adult Professional Culture?
- Characteristics of a Healthy APC
  - Tapping your experience: Think of a Time...
  - 12 Norms of a Strong APC
- How It Works: What Leaders Do to Build a Strong APC
- Vulnerable and Strong at the Same Time
- Gruenert's School Culture Typology
  - Consensogram & Data Driven Dialogue
- Trust: The Foundation of APC (Lencioni, Green, Brown)
  - Trust that What?.....Relational Trust: 10 Arenas where it is built
  - Create Vignettes



# Tapping into our own experience



Think of a time when you were energized and learning a lot about teaching and learning...when your practice improved a great deal.

What were the qualities of the human environment, you relationships where you worked?  
What were the surrounding conditions that enabled that?





# 12 Elements

## Visible Practices of Strong Adult Professional Culture

### LEARNING ORGANIZATION

1. Frequent teaching in the presence of other adults (Public Teaching)
2. Safety to take risks, be vulnerable in front of colleagues
3. Constant learning about High-Expertise Teaching...and access...
4. Environment of Reflection with Habits of Mindful Inquiry

# 12 Elements



## Visible Practices of Strong Adult Professional Culture

### TEAMS & DATA

5. Deep collaboration and deliberate design for interdependent work and joint responsibility for student results
6. Non-defensive self-examination of teaching practice in relation to student results
7. Constant use of data to re-focus teaching

# 12 Elements



## Visible Practices of Strong Adult Professional Culture

### PASSION AND PRESS

8. Urgency and press to reach all students and do better for our disadvantaged students
9. Commitment to implement “Smart is something you can get” in classroom practice, class structures, and school policies and procedures

# 12 Elements



## Visible Practices of Strong Adult Professional Culture

### HUMANE CARING ENVIRONMENT

10. Human environment of caring, appreciation and recognition, getting to know one another, traditions we look forward to



# 12 Elements

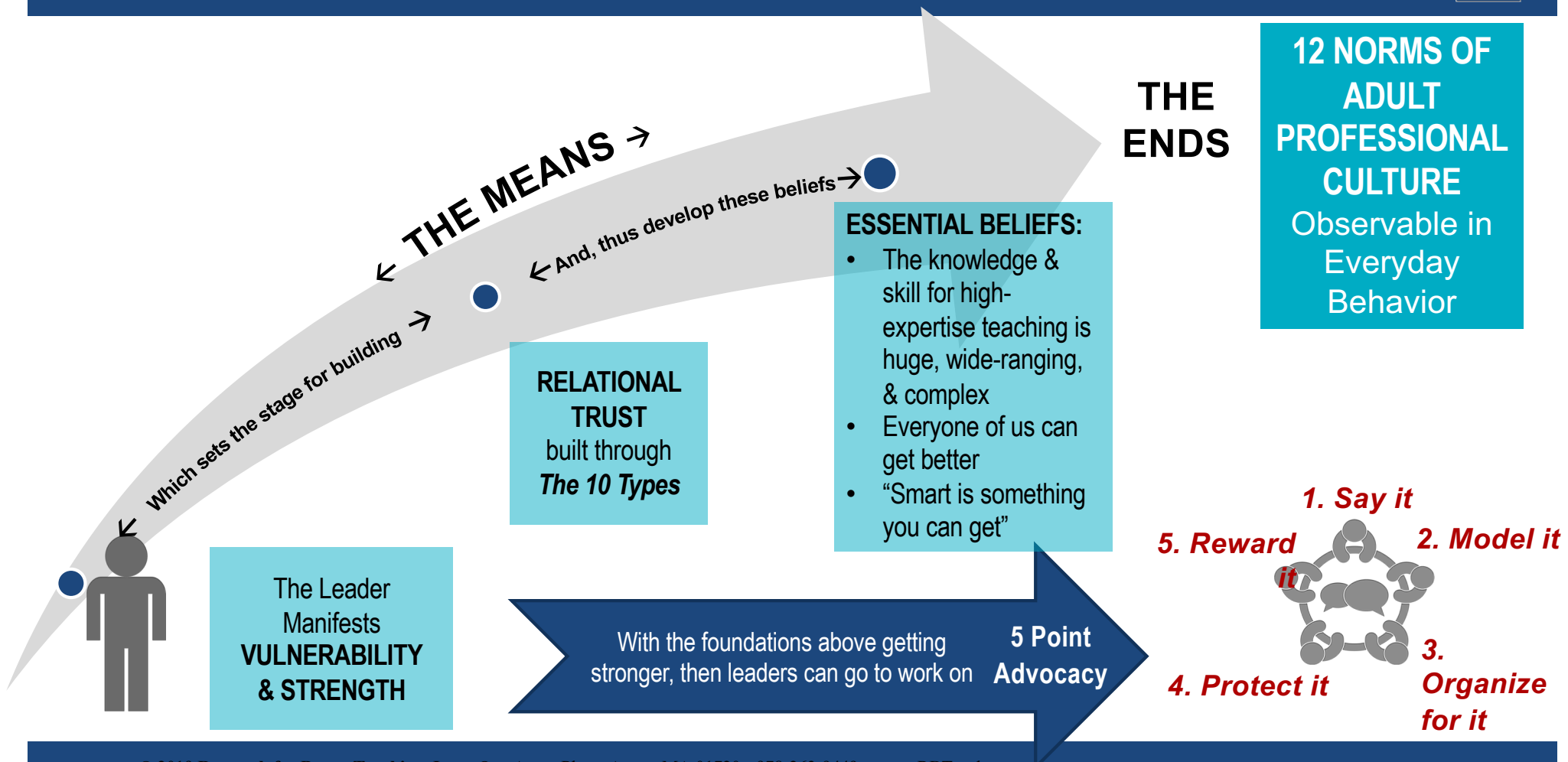


## Visible Practices of Strong Adult Professional Culture

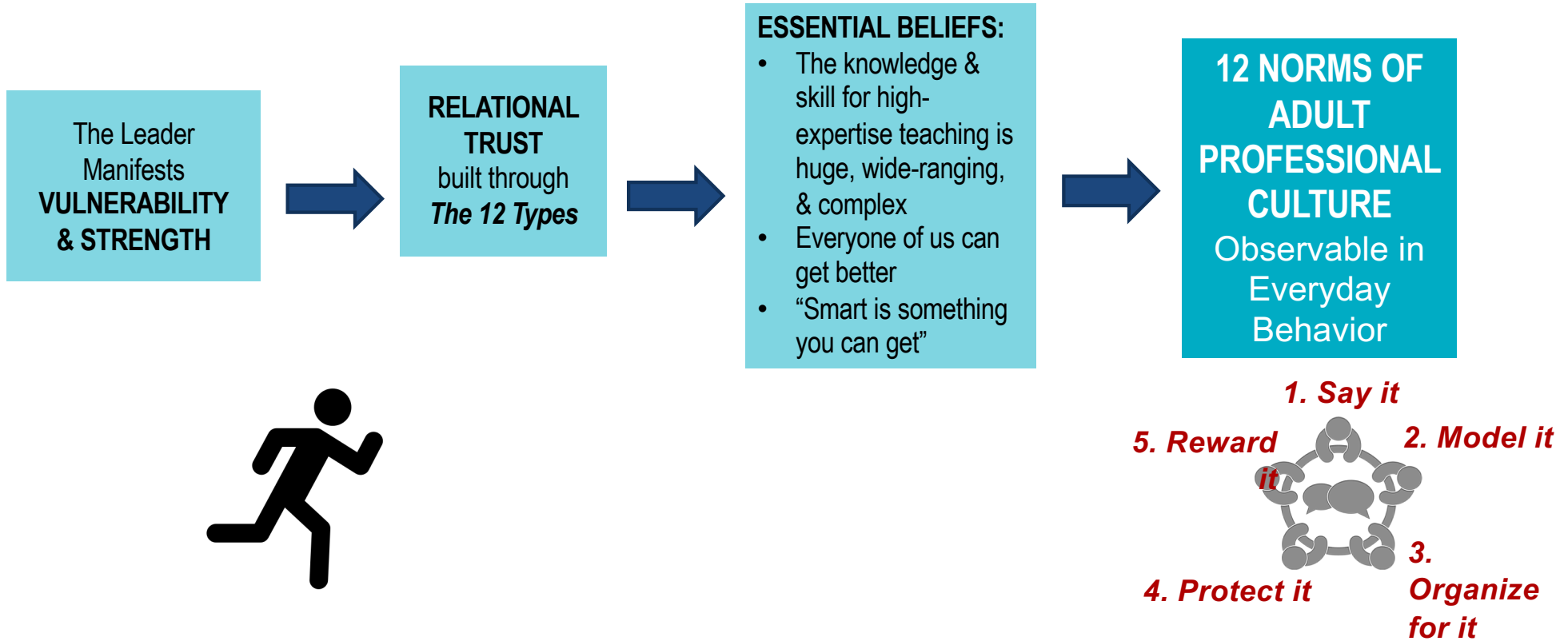
### CRITICAL FEEDBACK

11. Demanding and high standards for development *towards* high expertise teaching for all teachers
12. Honest, open communication and ability to have difficult conversations

# WHAT LEADERS DO TO BUILD STRONG ADULT PROFESSIONAL CULTURE



# It's not linear!

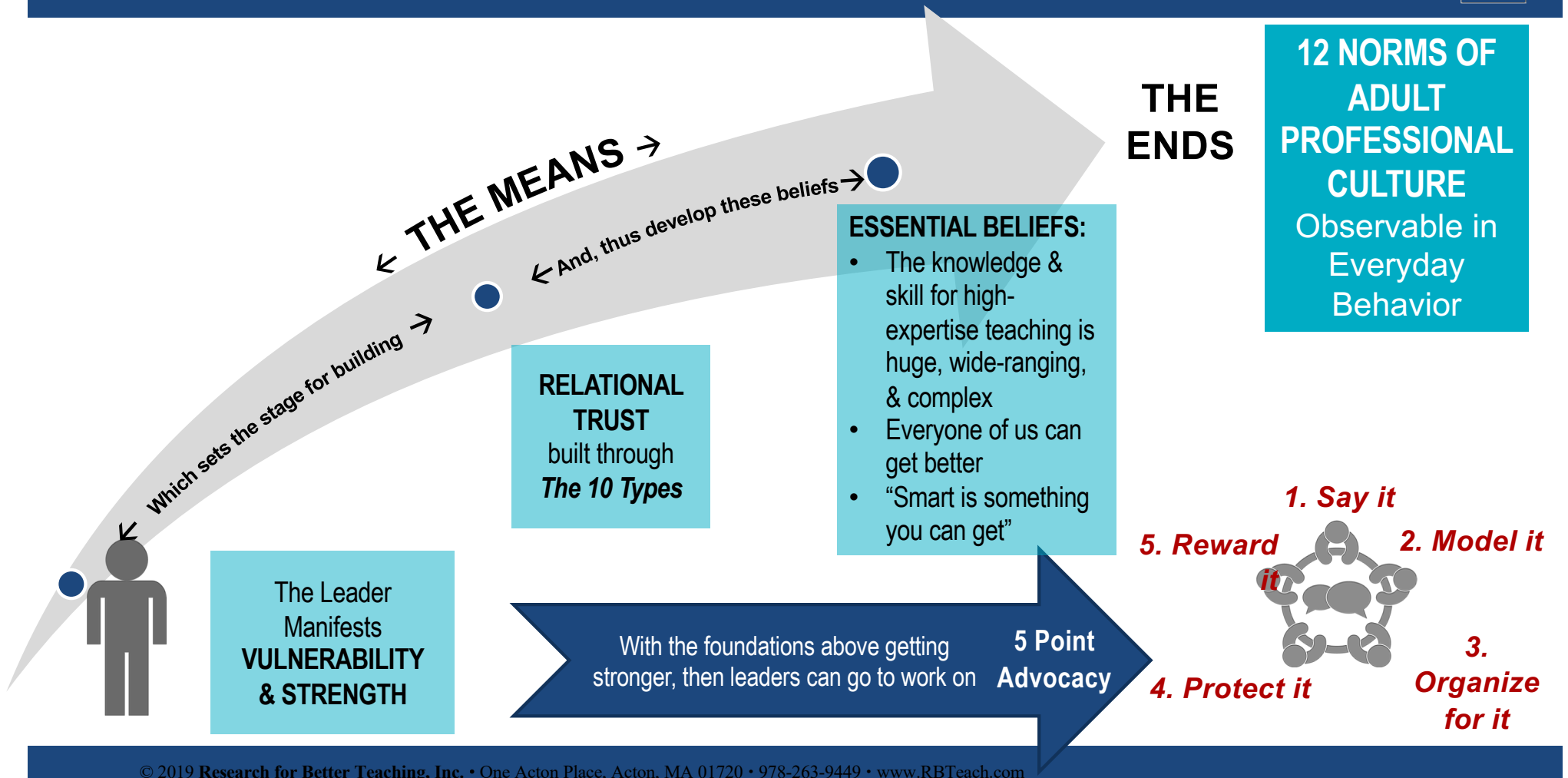






Building strong APC is not a new item to put on your long list of tasks or to-do's. Strong APC is built through everyday life in schools and how you and I handle the events in the flow of daily life.

# WHAT LEADERS DO TO BUILD STRONG ADULT PROFESSIONAL CULTURE



# Trust: Patrick Lencioni



<https://www.bing.com/videos/search?q=lencioni+defining+trust&pc=cosp&ptag=G6C999N1234D010118A316A5D3C6E&conlogo=CT3210127&ru=%2fsearch%3fq%3dlencioni%2520defining%2520trust%26pc%3dcosp%26ptag%3dG6C999N1234D010118A316A5D3C6E%26form%3dCONBDF%26conlogo%3dCT3210127&view=detail&mmscn=vwrc&mid=E7508ACAAE3651182926E7508ACAAE3651182926&FORM=WRVORC>

# Vulnerability & Strength



## Vulnerability and Inspired Leadership



## Strength



What are the things you want for this school, for our children. People would conclude you : “feel very strongly that this is something we should do/accomplish/ care about”?

....e.g,.....



*For example...Every child has an adult who knows them, values them, and cares about them.*

*All our students can explain why the math algorithms they use work.*



*All our classes have established community among the students that has been deliberately built.*

*We design rigorous work for all our students to raise the bar for their achievement, and we give them the tools and scaffolding to do this work*

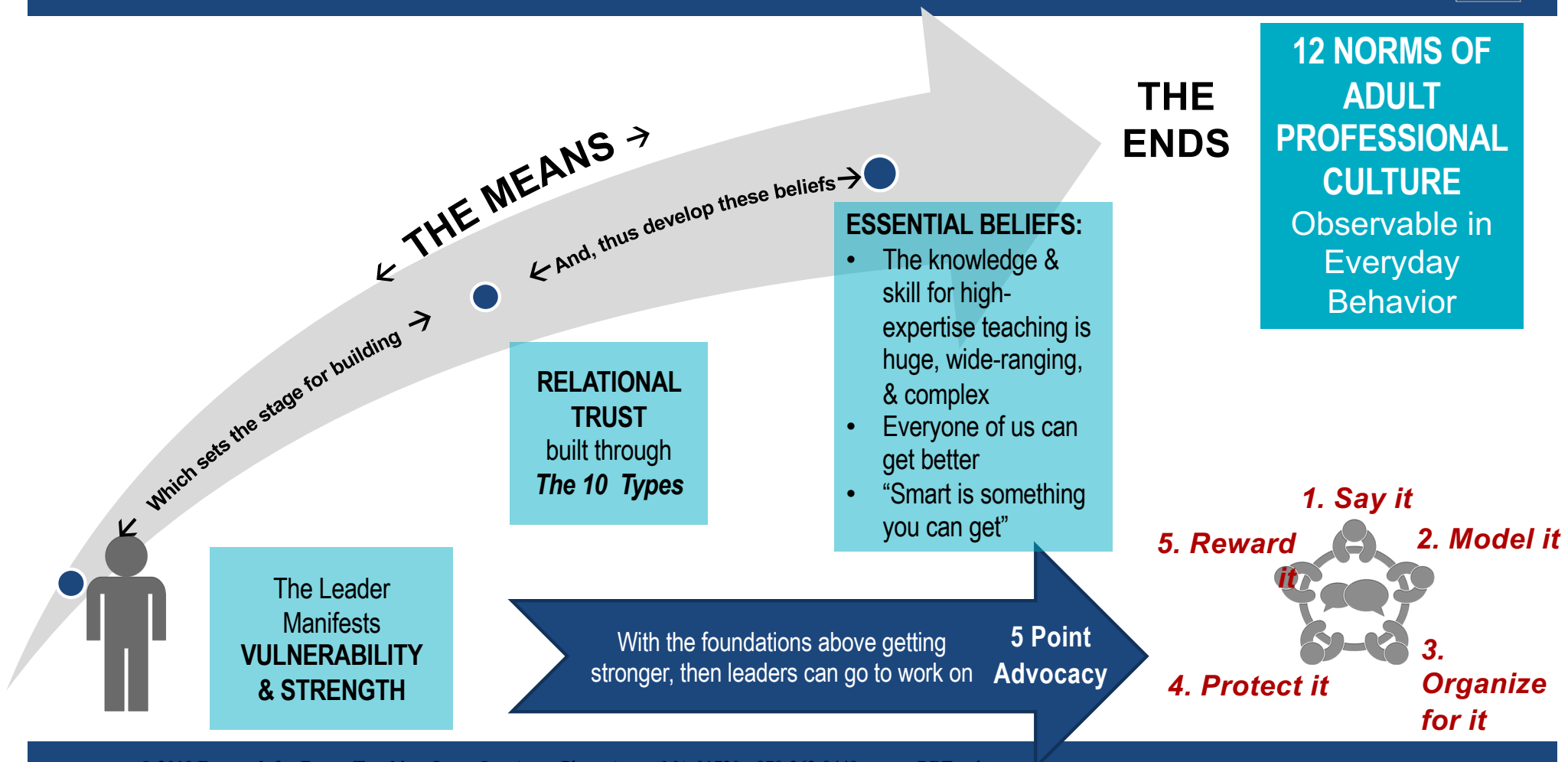


How would people know you stand  
for these things?

What would you do so they do?



# WHAT LEADERS DO TO BUILD STRONG ADULT PROFESSIONAL CULTURE





# “Relational Trust”: 10 Arenas



*I trust that...*

1. You are competent
2. You think I am a worthwhile person
3. You will make it safe for us
4. You will be honest
5. Your integrity
6. You will act courageously
7. You will make legitimate decisions
8. You will deliver results
9. You will show me respect
10. You will act in a caring and compassionate way

**What other  
bullets  
would you  
add to  
these lists?**

# Relational Trust: 10 Arenas



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**HO 3-5**

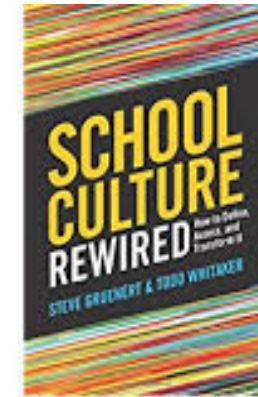
**Choose one of the  
bulleted items  
from the list and  
tell a story.....**

# Gruenert & Whittaker's School Culture Typology



**Professional Culture Typology**  
(This typology is designed to describe teacher culture, not an entire school.)

	None	Progressing	Established	Emerging Collegial	Developing Collaborative	Established
<b>Student Achievement</b>	Many teachers seem to believe that the entire discipline is the student's fault.	Teachers don't seem to have conversations about this.	These discussions only occur to deal with discipline meetings, referrals, and other "troubling" events.	Teachers don't have these conversations, but they do have conversations created by "parents, that is," and they tend to only talk about student achievement.	Teachers are getting into these, but usually talk about achievement from student achievement (grades, percent, etc.).	Teachers are getting into these, but usually talk about achievement from student achievement (grades, percent, etc.).
<b>Collegial Awareness</b>	Most teachers seem to be focused only on their classrooms and don't seem to care about the effectiveness of the teachers around them.	Most of the teachers are unaware of what is happening outside their classrooms.	Most teachers that only do work of what they are doing and reading.	Teachers seem to be aware of what others are doing and reading.	Teachers are personally engaged and discuss what they are doing and reading.	Teachers are personally engaged and discuss what they are doing and reading.
<b>Shared Values</b>	Values that many teachers share may be more aligned with what needs that students want.	There is little agreement among teachers regarding educational values.	There are few or no small groups of teachers who have similar educational values.	Small groups of teachers exist for the educational system for the teachers.	Teachers may agree on educational values.	Teachers are aligned in educational values.
<b>Decision Making</b>	Decisions making is very difficult for teachers because they are not sure about the decisions that are made.	Teachers do not seem to be involved in decisions that are made.	Small groups of teachers are involved in decisions that are made about students.	Small groups of teachers are involved in decisions that are made about students.	Teachers share in decisions that are made about students.	Teachers expect one another to be involved in decisions concerning students.
<b>Risk Taking</b>	A lot of teachers seem to be very protective of their teaching style.	Teachers tend to stick to the "safe and easy" path.	Teachers tend to stick to the "safe and easy" path.	Teachers are not afraid to try new things in the classroom.	Teachers share in decisions that are made about students.	Teachers are always looking for new ideas and strategies.



★★★★★ (36 Reviews)

HO 9-11

To determine the type of culture you have and how far is it from the one you want...

# School Culture Survey



Please respond on a scale from **1 strongly disagree** to **5 strongly agree**.

HO 6

1. Leaders in the school trust the professional judgment of teachers. (BLUE)  1  2  3  4  5
2. Teachers are involved in the decision making process. (GREEN)  1  2  3  4  5
3. Teachers are rewarded for experimenting with new ideas and techniques. (PINK)  1  2  3  4  5
4. Disagreements over instructional practice are voiced openly and discussed. (ORANGE)  1  2  3  4  5

# Jig-Saw Visible Practices of Strong APC



**A. Learning Organization (#s 1-3) pages 98-99**

**B. Teams & Data (#s 4-7) pages 99-101**

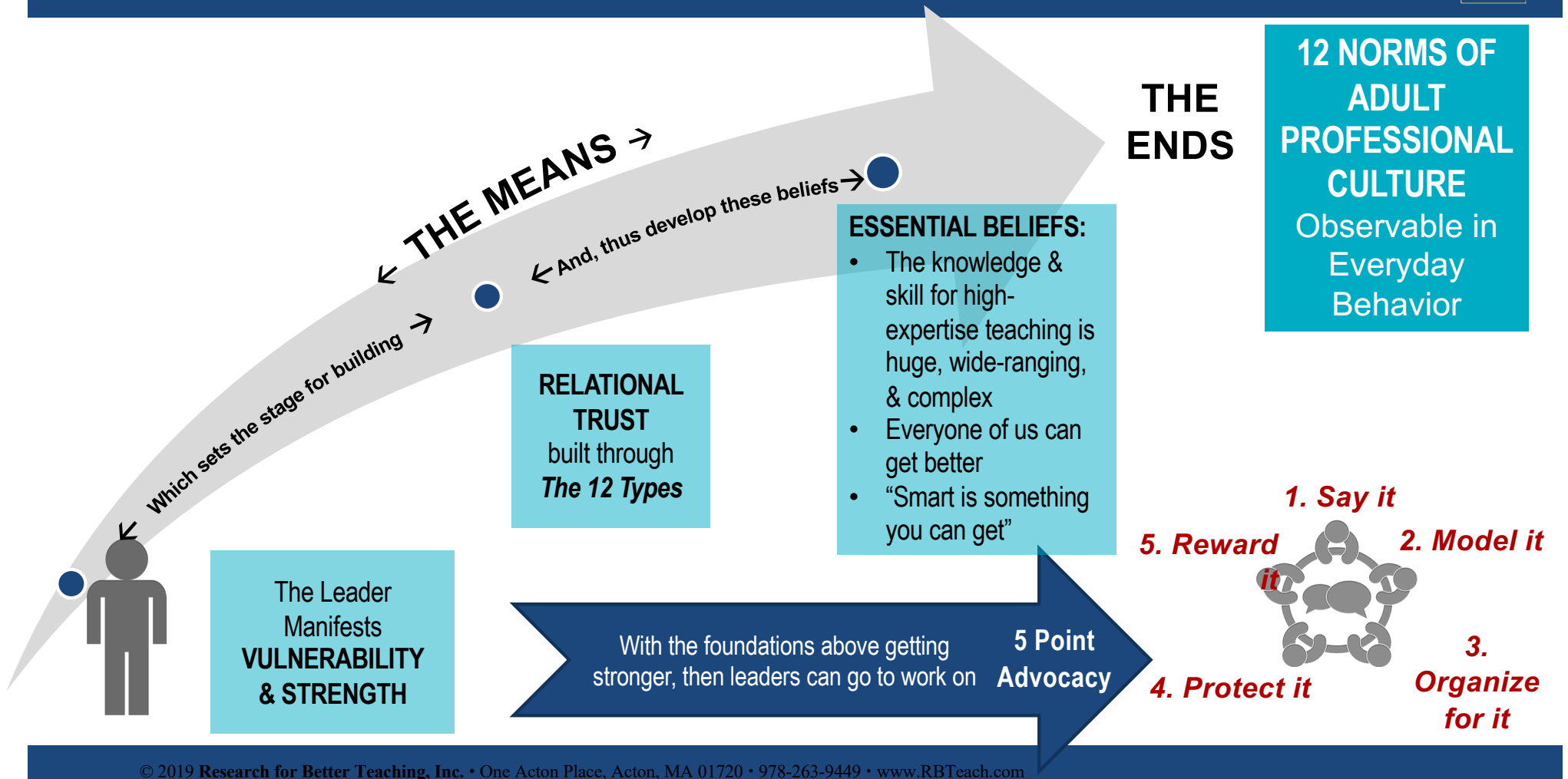
**C. Passion & Press (#s 8-9) pages 101-102**

**Caring and Consideration (#10)**

**D. Critical Feedback (#s 11-12) pages 102-103**

Chapter 7  
“How Leaders Strengthen Adult Culture”

# WHAT LEADERS DO TO BUILD STRONG ADULT PROFESSIONAL CULTURE





## Visible Practices of a Strong Adult Professional Culture

### LEARNING ORGANIZATION

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  2. Ability to take risks, be vulnerable in front of colleagues
  3. Constant learning about High-Expertise Teaching
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### TEAMS & DATA

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### PASSION AND PRESS

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### CRITICAL FEEDBACK

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