

# *Preface*

I wrote this book because of the feedback I received from the many teachers who attended my seminars and courses that deal with issues of teamwork, interaction, conflict resolution, and leadership. These are topics that are regularly and appropriately aimed at the administrative audience, but teachers at the primary and secondary levels have communicated to me that such topics are equally critical for them. Two years ago, I decided to act on the advice that I should write a book so that more teachers could access the tools from my teachings.

Studies have long shown and researchers have come to understand that people working in the same organization influence one another's attitudes, thoughts, feelings, and even performance. In the late 1960s, Frederick Roethlisberger (1969/2003) wrote that most of us want the satisfaction that comes from being accepted and recognized as people of worth by our friends and work associates. These same conclusions are as applicable to schools and the teachers who work in those schools as to any other organization. More than ever, teachers must work together to address a range of issues, from classroom pedagogy to campus improvement. Teachers can thrive in their school environments if they combine their expertise in the classroom with the interpersonal skills necessary to build a collegial environment.

In Chapter 1, the case is made that teachers need a resource to help build collegiality. There are other factors that contribute to a successful school, but few resources exist that provide tools to help teachers productively interact and work with others. In this chapter and all others, the examples, illustrations, and assessments draw on experiences from the field of education.

In Chapter 2, the language of leadership is cast in a light that is applicable to every teacher. The ideas of leadership in this chapter become manifest through exercises and self-assessments so that teachers may apply these ideas to themselves and their schools.

## viii Teachers Working Together for School Success

In Chapter 3, the concepts from personality psychology offer opportunities for teachers to gain insight into their own behaviors and actions as well as those of their colleagues and administrators.

Chapter 4 is reserved for the all-important topic of conflict resolution, because the question is not whether conflict will happen but when it will happen and how you will handle it.

The insights offered by Chapters 3 and 4 are complementary to the topic of teamwork, which is the focus of Chapter 5. The effectiveness of a team is enhanced when its members know how to communicate with different personalities and have different options for dealing with conflict.

Chapter 6 concentrates on the teacher-administrator relationship, and it is here that a working knowledge of different leadership styles can help you work more productively with the formal leaders in your schools.

Chapter 7 is critical because it asks you to think about yourself as a teacher, both inside and outside the classroom. All of the chapters prior to this self-assessment serve the purpose of helping you discover yourself and how you work with colleagues and administrators so that you can more easily assess yourself honestly and accurately.

Chapter 8 pulls the book together and directly states the main message: Everything in the book is meant to be a tool to help teachers improve themselves and their professional relationships.

A side note, but one which I find particularly important, is that each and every chapter is as applicable to our personal lives as our professional lives. I do not believe that we can completely separate our professional and personal lives, because each affects the other. It is my hope that you will find application in both of these overlapping spheres.