Values Education:
The Power2Achieve Approach For Building Sustainability and Enduring Impact

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Introduction

In various forms and from differing perspectives the writings of this special issue focus on an essential question guiding our own work for many years: how do we most effectively develop the human potential for good? We have argued that approaches to maximizing the human potential for good must include a focus on *both* excellence and ethics, on doing our work well *and* treating each other with justice and care. Developing in students a "conscience of craft" (Green, 1984) is as essential for their wellbeing, as developing an ethical conscience about issues of right and wrong. What we presented to the field of education was a paradigm shift (c.f., Lickona & Davidson, 2005, Davidson, Khmelkov, and Lickona, 2007) from an exclusive focus on moral character to a focus on both performance character *and* moral character; and, from a focus on character education for its own sake, to a focus on character education as providing the character and culture most immediately *needed for teaching and learning*, and ultimately for success in school, work, and beyond. Building a culture of excellence and ethics within schools and individual classrooms is the cornerstone of a holistic approach to teaching and learning.

Building on the work of Lickona (1991), which integrates applied theory and social science into practical and accessible strategies for implementation, the Smart & Good research (Lickona and Davidson, 2005) reflected our continuing quest to synthesize theory & research with sound recommendations for implementation. The *Power2Achieve* framework that we describe in this article reflects the lessons we have learned through field-testing the first version of curricular materials and professional development approaches and outlines our

current thinking about how to blend theoretical and practical fidelity with theoretical and practical convenience.

Power2 Field Research

During 2008-2009 our team began working on the development of a first version of programming designed to put the vision of the Smart & Good High Schools report into replicable curricular and professional development resources. Throughout all phases of the program development and beta testing we collaborated with leader organizations in Kansas and Iowa, including the Kansas Department of Education, the Institute for Character Development at Drake University, the Iowa Department of Education, and the Iowa Business Council, as well as school administrators and teachers to establish the functional specifications for the new programming. Program materials were developed and pilot-tested in 23 high schools in Iowa, Kansas, New York, and New Jersey. Feedback from the sites was primarily collected by the Center for the 4th & 5th Rs, with some data gathering activities conducted by IEE. Results were analyzed and reported independently by the Center (Lickona, 2010).

Feedback from all pilot schools was solicited throughout the year-long experience via an online system (12 schools responded). In addition, project partners in Iowa and Kansas selected Leader Schools which were targeted for more intense feedback, including site visits during the fall and spring semesters. Iowa's Institute for Character Development identified three Leader Schools there; four were identified by the Kansas State Education Department. Leader Schools were chosen based on their readiness and for strategic diversity regarding school demographics and context.

Data Sources and Methods

In pursuit of trustworthy data for improvement and impact, a mixed-method design was utilized drawing data from the following:

- Schools leaders (administrators and the Power2 faculty leadership teams)—through online feed-back, individual interviews, focus groups, and phone conversations;
- Teachers of Power2—through online feedback, focus groups, individual interviews, and observing classroom Power2 lessons;
- Students who experienced the Power2 lessons—through online feedback, focus groups, our first-hand observation of lessons, and interviews;
- Faculty experiencing Power2Teach—through focus groups and interviews;
- External coaches—through online feedback, phone & in-person interviews.

Representatives from IEE's design team also conducted interviews and observations with teachers, students, and school leaders at strategic points throughout the school year. Student, staff, and coaches' feedback was shared immediately with the design team. The feedback was analyzed by (1) comparing and contrasting feedback from different schools, (2) putting the feedback in the context of program objectives described above, and (3) rectifying the feedback and potential changes within the financial and time limitations of the design team and the schools.

Following unit 1 changes were made in the design, as well as in the coaching of schools (since oftentimes improvements required implementation changes, not simply design changes). Certainty regarding specific design changes was often difficult, if not impossible, to ascertain. Since recommendations were often contradicted by counter-assessments or recommendations (e.g., one teacher says they need more time, another wants less; one student hates a video,

another student loves it; students say they don't like a strategy, but also report using it). Therefore, changes were made on features where obvious clarity or consensus existed, so as to avoid snap judgments about changes that wouldn't add clear value.

Suggestions regarding formatting, the quality of the voice recording, timing, and increased student engagement were initiated beginning as early as Unit 2. Visits were made to schools by design team members and coaches to address improvements in providing teachers more control of lessons, video quality, and strategies for making the content and process better match students' and teachers' needs and abilities. Other lessons learned from early feedback were of more substantive nature. Whole units were rebuilt based on feedback—in the absence of funding and against severe time constraints. For example, feedback suggested the need for more time on whole-group discussion and more experiential activities. Such major changes in the construction of the lessons in Power2Learn were introduced in Unit 4 and further improved in Units 5-7.

Limitations of the Research

In spite of multiple data sources and methods of collecting data, our program feedback research had limitations. Our primary data sources were: (1) our 14 site visits (two to each of the seven Leader Schools), and (2) the online surveys soliciting student, teacher, and coach feedback. The online data bank had the limitation of receiving very little school feedback on Units 5-7 of the curriculum, which included a number of important design improvements. The site visits, our richest data source, were limited by their frequency and total time. A typical site visit included individual interviews with school leaders and teachers, meetings with the faculty leadership teams, focus groups with students and teachers, and observation of at least one

lesson. Because of time constraints, we observed only a very small sample of all the lessons being taught in any given school. More direct observation would have been optimal. In spite of its limitations, the field research yielded valuable data for ongoing program improvement, and led to significant revisions in our overall approach.

What follows is a description of the evolving theory and programmatic changes that we have made based on the lessons learned from field-testing research in 2009-2010.

Power2Achieve Framework: Contextualization and Alignment

Sizer & Sizer (1999) argue "schools have long had three core tasks: to prepare young people for the world of work; to prepare them to use their minds well, to think deeply and in an informed way; and to prepare them to be thoughtful citizens and decent human beings" (p. 10). This essential vision hasn't changed much since it was written, or since the release of *Smart & Good High Schools*. However, the economic and educational climate for those in education has changed dramatically. Any perspective that does not understand and respond to this new reality cannot hope to serve school customers. School administrators face acute pressure to link their school improvement plans to alignment and adherence with federal, state, and/or district policy requirements including, but not limited to: (1) general learning standards, special education standards, and other state and national academic achievement benchmarks, (2) teacher preparation and retention, and overall staff development objectives, (3) theoretical and reform frameworks and requirements, such as Response to Intervention (RTI), Social & Emotional Learning (SEL) Standards, and 21st Century Skills, (4) student retention (dropout prevention), (5) school safety and overall climate (including bullying prevention), and (6) post-

secondary readiness and work force preparation guidelines. These are priority issues for school administrators, deemed worthy of time and money, since failure to demonstrate alignment and adherence to these requirements results in lost economic support and other sanctions or consequences.

Whereas administrators feel the pinch at the macro level, classroom teachers feel ground level pressure from students and their families—especially from those that they are struggling to reach or teach. Thus, student engagement and grappling (Sizer and Sizer, 1999)—that is, active interest and authentic involvement—are still the most pressing need felt by teachers. Teachers are generally passionate about and educated in their content; but, content knowledge is only one element of effective education. As one headmaster put it, effective education requires "teachers ready to teach; students ready to learn; and something important to teach and learn" (Lickona and Davidson, 2005). Effective teachers have a with-it-ness that goes beyond content knowledge. Teacher with-it-ness (i.e., that intangible "it" in teachers that leads to student engagement and growth; that which separates impactful educators from content conveyors) is not simply a function of sage-like content knowledge; nor is it an "eyes in the back of your head" über-awareness. Teacher with-it-ness is really about a teacher's ability to intentionally shape the cultural norms of moral and performance character needed to support teaching and learning of the curriculum. This culture of excellence and ethics great teachers create provides the catalyst for learning.

Engagement and efficacy are the essential needs of student customers. They want and need to be known and needed, safe and cared for; and have an active role in shaping their learning. A safe and supportive climate is a prerequisite, but is itself insufficient for flourishing.

Students also want and need to be engaged learners, and they want to know how to develop their talents and abilities so that they might "get good" (efficacy) at something (Cushman, 2010). As Berger (2003) has argued, "work of excellence is transformational." Students who are just "doing school" (Pope, 2001) are not transformed in any meaningful way—too often they figure out how to do the minimum, get by, and put on a good show. Many who can't or won't play the game drop out from high school; just as many who play the game are ill-prepared for post-secondary challenges presented by work and school (c.f., Conference Board, 2009).

Families desire to have their children prepared to succeed in school, work, beyond, but feel pressured to support student learning at home, amid their own increasingly busy and time-stretched lives—often without the academic expertise to assist struggling children or with the new and evolving curriculum. They understand that educational success is an important predictor of success in life, but often struggle to translate that into a clear and consistent home-school approach that supports student engagement (Epstein, 2001). Communication to parents about school vision is critical, but still fails to provide the all-important communication about what exactly parents are expected to do in support of student learning.

School administrators, staff, students, and families are jointly impacted by the acute challenges that detract from teaching and learning: cheating, bullying, unsafe climate, disciplinary problems; lack of collegiality, trust, and professionalism; lack of parent participation and support of learning at home and school. The Power2Achieve framework seeks to meet the needs of schools through contextualization and alignment—both of which focus on the needs

of the whole spectrum of stake-holders as identified above, and through balancing convenience and fidelity of implementation delivery methods and materials.

Through *contextualization*, the Power2Achieve framework focuses on developing the culture and competencies of excellence and ethics needed for holistic teaching and learning, believing that only in and through such learning experience students develop the skills and dispositions essential for ongoing growth in their post-secondary education, in their future careers, and for civic engagement and democratic participation. Contextualization says as much about what we *don't* do, as what we do. It means that if the core mission of school context is teaching and learning, then that's where the time and materials of core programming must be directed. Developing the culture and competencies of excellence and ethics needed for teaching and learning thus becomes our overriding focus in the school context.

Power2Achieve is built in a "first understand, then be understood" approach. Rather than offering an additional set of goals and objectives, the Power2Achieve framework aligns itself with policy requirements and seeks to enhance existing educational initiatives, thus demonstrating a value-added proposition to schools. We have refined and revised the "8 Strengths" (Lickona & Davidson, 2007) into the following eight areas of focus in the Power2Achieve framework; in our experience these most closely align with the areas of greatest interest and need for schools:

1: Developing positive and productive relationships

2: Communicating and collaborating with efficiency and effectiveness

3: Managing priorities and reducing stress

4: Committing to high standards and continuous improvement

5: Demonstrating emotional intelligence, integrity, and responsibility

6: Exhibiting creativity and innovation; critical thinking and effective problem solving

7: Leading and serving others

8: Living a balanced, purposeful, and healthy life.

The eight focus areas are not used as specific developmental outcomes, but rather as an alignment heuristic mapping the areas most often identified in educational policy initiatives as contributing to or detracting from success in school, work, and beyond. Our efforts to align with existing frameworks and priorities in schools have not rendered the development of character and culture irrelevant. In fact we find that the development of character and culture is still essential—in fact, indispensable—in U.S. schools.

Theory of Impact

Berger (2003) argues that "excellence is born from a culture." The Power2Achieve framework is based on the notion that the development of character competencies occurs through the impact of an intentional organizational culture. Intentional culture is characterized by shared teaching and learning norms facilitated by the pervasive use of Power2Achieve teaching and learning tools and strategies targeted to important aspects of school core mission. The consistent experience of doing things a particular way (i.e., culture) results in certain habits, or competencies. Competencies are process skills that bridge awareness/sensitivity, reasoning/judgment, and behavior. For positive behavior to occur, individuals must recognize the need for specific positive action, process the contextual requirements, reason about what action to take, and finally to take action. When skills for each of these processes are fully developed and become automatic, cognition and action become intertwined and an individual

consistently engages in positive behavior (c.f., Narvaez, 2009). The Power2Achieve approach develops positive behavior skills through consistent and pervasive practice under the guidance of others (teachers, parents, mentors, or more qualified peers).

"We shape the culture, the culture shapes the character": this is how we articulate the mechanism for the impact of Power2Achieve. To have an impact, the culture needs to be direct and intentional: it needs to be focused on worthy goals (e.g., pursuit of excellence and ethics), evident in shared norms about teaching and learning (e.g., use of consistent tools and practices linked to moral and performance character), and continuously lived through actions (e.g., frequent and pervasive teaching practices and learning behaviors). In other words, an intentional culture of excellence and ethics is comprised of teaching practices and learning behaviors that develop the targeted skills and competencies, which all stake-holders use consistently over time. An effective culture does not happen by chance, it happens by intentional design. How does a school shape the culture in a way that focuses teaching and learning, both in the classrooms and in all other activities, on the development of needed competencies? Within the framework of Power2Achieve, the reshaping of the culture, as well as teaching and learning experiences, is facilitated by providing Power2Achieve tools and strategies that:

- help teachers introduce the required skills in (a) a stand-alone class and/or (b) integrated into their regular content classes or other activities;
- allow teachers to continuously return to the practice of the skill/competency throughout the school year (repeated practice over time) or in new and different

contexts (either in other classes or in co-/extra-curricular activities—repeated practice through application to different situations);

- allow students to continuously practice the skill/competency on their own outside the classroom;
- can also be used by parents/families to reinforce the practice of the skill/competency by the youth (guidance of practice by others).

In other words, the Power2Achieve Tools are designed for repeated use, by all stakeholders, across contexts, which when consistently and pervasively used over time define the school culture or way of being. However, for any approach to be adopted and sustained over time, it needs, in turn, to present a viable convenience and fidelity proposition for implementation.

Power2Achieve Convenience-Fidelity of Implementation Proposition

The Power2Achieve approach is based on the notion that competencies are developed through the use of convenient tools and strategies (easy to use and connected to important aspects of core mission) that are implemented with fidelity (e.g., with depth or quality, with breadth throughout the culture, and with consistency over time). Herein lies what we see as essential condition needed for scaleable character education programs: finding a viable balance between convenience and fidelity. Based on the work of Maney (2009), the following graphic represents four types of convenience-fidelity propositions. Enduring impact comes when you get high implementation convenience and high implementation fidelity.

[insert figure 1 about here]

There are two dimensions within the convenience concept, theoretical convenience and practical convenience. *Theoretical convenience* is the extent to which programming is designed to support the core mission of the organization. The theoretical convenience of Power2Achieve is the programming's utility for meeting pressing student challenges (e.g., discipline problems, hard to reach students, etc.) and for addressing pressing policy requirements (RTI, SEL, 21st Century Skills). *Implementation convenience* means the total feasibility with which programming can be acquired and used. Implementation convenience represents a ratio of the following major elements: (a) financial cost and human/time cost, (e.g., to be trained, to prepare for delivery of lessons/materials, for actual delivery of lessons/materials, including management, etc.), relative to (b) time recovered (e.g., from better strategies for handling persistent behavior problems, from better strategies for engaging all learners, etc.) and ease and satisfaction for stake-holders (e.g., easy for teachers to teach, engaging for students).

Theoretical fidelity refers to theoretical and empirical depth and rigor behind the approach. Does a poster on the wall have theoretical fidelity? Not if it's a pretty picture and an inspirational quote, since there is no theoretical or empirical basis to suggest that pretty, inspirational posters define culture or change character. But, there is theoretical fidelity if that poster is an Attitude-Effort-Improvement Rubric linked to the theory and science of achievement motivation and the development of expertise, and if that poster represents replicable strategies that become consistently and pervasively used. Theoretical fidelity of Power2Achieve programming is enhanced through ongoing collection of formative feedback from implementation sites and a continuous cycle of continuous improvement to build tools that connect the most persistent challenges to the most effective research-based tools.

Implementation fidelity refers to the consistent and effective use of programming, including the following major elements: (1) frequency of use (e.g., how frequently are the tools used—generally, and in relation to the situations where the tool should/could be used); (2) pervasiveness (e.g., what percentage of stakeholders—administrators, teachers, students, and parents—are using the tools); (3) quality (e.g., how close to its recommended or intended use is the tool actually being used). The Power2Achieve framework strives to offer schools a convenience-fidelity proposition that leads to sustainability and enduring impact. The convenience-fidelity balance is achieved through flexible implementation approaches for delivery of the concrete teaching and learning tools.

Power2Achieve Tools

Our field-testing experience indicates that establishing a convenience-fidelity proposition for enduring impact requires tools, strategies, and delivery methods that are specific, replicable, tightly aligned to policy, linked to a rigorous research base, and can be flexibly integrated into existing school structures. Power2Achieve curricular resources seek to bridge the gap between theory and research and the actual day-to-day implementation practices by creating teaching and learning Tools that serve as building blocks for multiple and varied implementation approaches .

This discovery in our own work is supported in the work of Heath and Heath (2010) who argue that "what looks like resistance is often lack of clarity" and to get past so-called "resistance" or failure to change "crystal-clear direction" must be provided (p. 16-17). Schools need theory and research that has been distilled into teaching and learning tools they can

understand, remember, and use—not surprising, but what was surprising to us is how much further refinement our tools needed to provide the "crystal-clear direction" required for sustainable, impactful implementation. For example, in the Smart & Good Report we outlined the research on the importance of performance character qualities like effort and attitude, trying to instruct schools in the importance of these in the development of talent and expertise. We also recommended an "effort and achievement rubric" that we thought held promise. However, in our efforts to apply this recommendation through our field research with schools, we discovered that the rubric was good, but not good enough as an applied tool for consistent and convenient implementation. This led to the creation of our Power2Achieve Attitude-Effort-Improvement rubric.

[insert figure 2 about here]

Developed in alignment with the research base on achievement motivation and talent development (e.g., Dweck, 2006; Pink, 2009; Colvin, 2008; Ericsson et al., 2006), it provides what is simple (improvement in attitude + improvement in effort = improvement towards your desired goal) and memorable (defining the attitude and effort anchors in concrete, observable terms). It is simple, but not simplistic—and certainly not easy. Faithful use of this tool over time is required for it to become an operational cultural norm, and for those operating in that culture to develop the actual competencies. This tool, and the battery of Power2Achieve tools, provides "good enough heuristics" to guide behavior (Narvaez, 2009). They compress the theoretical fidelity of the existing research into convenient (i.e., simple, concrete, memorable, action-oriented) norms for behavior. This is not "bumper-sticker morality" (Jackson, 1993), as certain word-of-the-week, poster-on-the-wall approaches have been caricatured. Instead these

are intentional norms for guiding action and reflection; consistent and pervasive operation according to these norms define a school's "way" (i.e., culture), which in term shapes the character of those operating according to that way. Or, as Narvaez states: "heuristics are intuitions built from repeated experiences which are retained in implicit memory systems" (2009, p. 12).

Our Power2Achieve Integrity-in-Action Checlist is a second example demonstrating the evolution in our tools for the intentional shaping of culture and character, this time focusing on moral character. In the *Smart & Good Schools* report, we recommended that educators use ethical tests for developing the ability to make well-reasoned ethical decisions—an issue impacting the core mission of schools, given the prevalence of cheating (c.f., McCabe, 2001; Callahan, 2004) and the pernicious way that cheating undermines the culture of excellence and ethics. We provided nine such tests that schools could choose to model from, but also recommended that they might consider having the students brainstorm their own ethical tests in small groups and construct a composite list. Our field research indicated that these general recommendations were insufficient in providing schools an implementation plan that was convenient or capable of being implemented with fidelity (even though the actual content of the original tests was very close to what we used in the revised rubric). Thus, we developed the Power2Achieve Integrity-in-Action Checklist, nine dichotomous tests that provide a template for putting integrity in action, along with clear instructions for interpreting one's responses.

[insert figure 3 about here]

This Tool serves as another heuristic to guide thinking and behavior, so that with consistent and pervasive use it becomes the organizational "way," which shapes individual habits and behavior.

Tools that are convenient don't guarantee implementation with fidelity. Just because you have a tool or strategy in your "toolbox" does not guarantee that it will be used in a powerful way by educators. In our original *Smart & Good Schools* report, we identified what we called the "4 KEYS master strategy", the "operating system" behind the most powerful practices we observed. We were trying to get beyond the power of personality and circumstance for explaining why certain practices and strategies were so impactful in the hands of one educator, and yet not as impactful in the hands of another. What we discovered was the strategic use of four key teaching strategies (Self-Study, Other-Study, Public Performance/Presentation, Support & Challenge).

[insert figure 4 about here]

In subsequent publications we established the research base behind this master strategy (c.f., Davidson, Lickona, & Khmelkov, 2010; Davidson, Lickona, Khmelkov, 2008). The 4 KEYS, as we previously used them, were important but insufficient for changing school practices. Without a specific tool or strategy to work with, the 4 KEYS require too much time, training, and expertise for convenient and widespread use. It is the combination of specific tools and the 4 KEYS master strategy for opening up the power of the tools that represents the technology advances in translating our knowledge about character development into action.

Conclusion

When it comes to developing character competencies, general knowledge is insufficient—for both teachers and students. They need concrete tools and strategies, which they can use repeatedly and pervasively. Over time these norms for behavior becomes part of the culture, or way of doing business; when something becomes a norm of how you operate, individual competencies (or habits) result. When the culture and competencies developed are linked to factors that enhance core mission, they become essential—necessary, not just nice.

As Maney (2009) notes, customers are often forced to make a tradeoff between fidelity and convenience. Our current field-testing research is designed to determine the most convenient and effective delivery approach. Through market research with schools we currently serve, we have identified different delivery combinations, which balance convenience and fidelity in different ways. They are primarily driven by the school's own convenience-fidelity proposition, but have not as yet been substantiated by empirical evidence (which is the focus of our current research). Our own intuitions and experiences might suggest that fidelity is inconvenient (it has to cost lots of money and time to do anything well). However, as Maney (2009) notes, a "tech effect" improves both convenience and fidelity. Advances in our Power2Achieve tools and the 4 KEYS master strategy is the technology advance we believe will improve implementation convenience *and* implementation fidelity.

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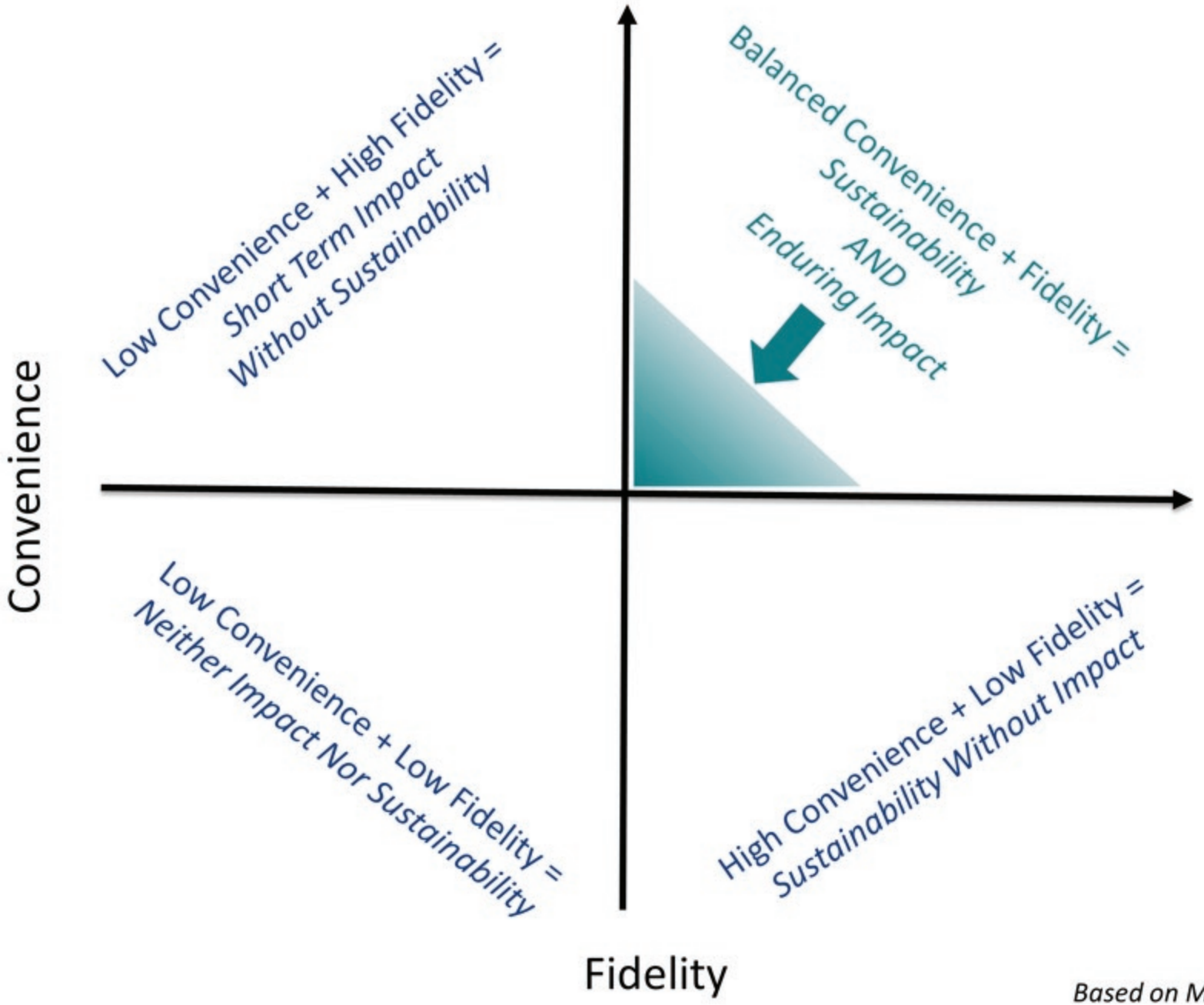
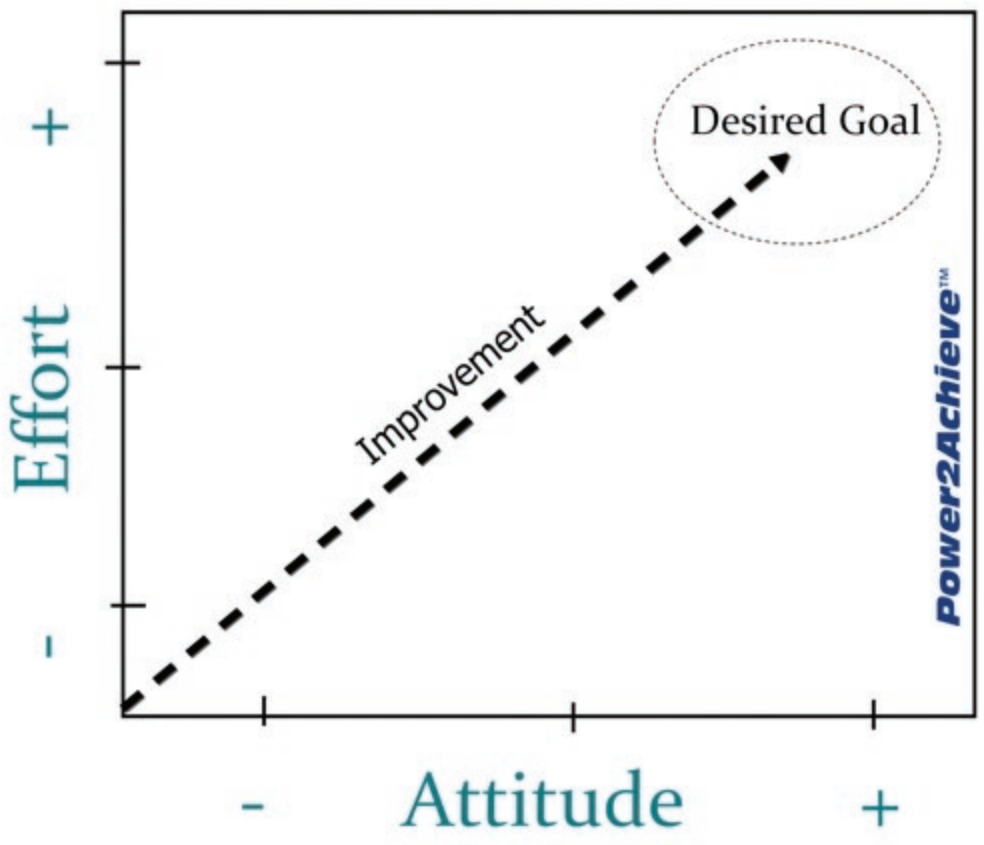


Power2Achieve™

Based on Maney (2009)

P2A AEI Rubric

A Lot of Effort (3)	• **Continued persevering** even when difficulties come up. • **Tried lots of strategies** to overcome failures, setbacks, or limitations in ability.
Some Effort (2)	• **Gave some effort** to try and understand the task/challenge. • **Worked through some difficulties.** • **Partially completed** the task/challenge.
Little or No Effort (1)	• **Didn't try** at all. • **Quit** as soon as difficulties came up.
Great Attitude (3)	• **Enthusiastic** about the task/challenge. • **Confident** in likelihood of success. • **Eager** for new growth gained from the task/challenge.
Good Attitude (2)	• **Willing** to take on the task/challenge. • **Hopeful** of success. • **Open** to new learning and growth.
Bad Attitude (1)	• **Resistant** to task/challenge. • **Defeated** before beginning; convinced of failure. • **Defensive** of new growth required by the task/challenge.



P2A Integrity-in-Action-Checklist

Would my decision pass each of these tests?	Yes	No
Golden Rule Test: If the situation was reversed, is this how I would want to be treated?		
Fairness Test: Is this fair to everybody involved in and affected by my actions?		
Truth Test: Does this represent the whole truth—no distortions, omissions, or spin?		
Conscience Test: Will I feel good about this afterwards (no regrets, no guilt)?		
Parent Test: Will my parents be proud of this?		
Front-Page Test: Would I want this reported on the front-page of the newspaper?		
Consequences Test: Will this lead to positive consequences and avoid negative consequences now or in the future?		
What-If-Everybody-Did-This Test: Would I want to live in a world where everybody did this?		
Religion Test: If I have religious beliefs, would a respected member of my religion or our religious teachings advise this?		

Power2Achieve™

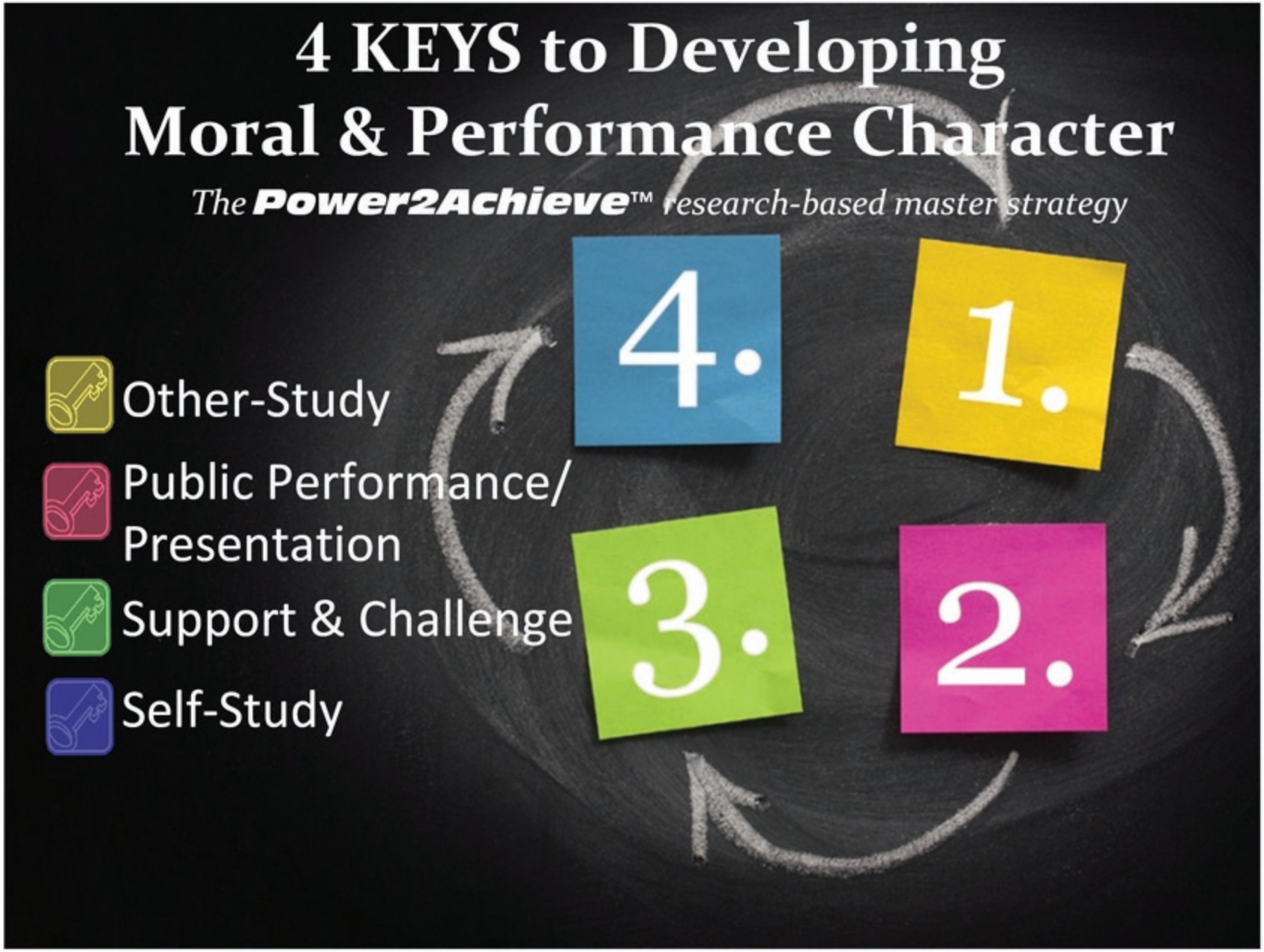
What if it's still not clear what to do?

- Stop!
- Think it over some more.
- Seek additional insight from individuals whose integrity you respect.

Power2Achieve™

4 KEYS to Developing Moral & Performance Character

The **Power2Achieve**™ *research-based master strategy*



- Other-Study
- Public Performance/ Presentation
- Support & Challenge
- Self-Study