Kick the Childish Stuff to the Curb

You are a person…
You work with people…
Therefore you have people problems.

It's exhausting to work with people that make everything *just so hard*. You probably begin to interact with them in ways that are consistent with your view of them. They keep exhausting you. You try this and you try that and it seems no matter what you say or do, nothing helps. Often the more you do, the worse it gets.

It's super frustrating because all you want is for them to do their job. After all, you wouldn't be in this cycle of irritation if they would just do what they're supposed to do already.

You feel like you're either in the sandbox or the halls of high school and it's totally not fair they get to be a jerk while you have to fix it. Or you get to be the jerk because clearly they need to be put in their place. Can't everyone just act like adults and do what they're supposed to do?!

I believe they would act like adults if they could. And so would you. What if it's your default, your childish coping skill, that's blocking you from understanding what's happening? And same for them.

Figuring out what's actually causing the problems, conflicts, and general people issues can be *just so exhausting*. And you're busy and have way too much real work to do. It's not fair and you didn't sign up for this. **Cue foot stomping.**

Depending on the day or the "problem person" of the moment you may react differently. One day you may think, "Well clearly they need someone to just fix this for them." *You're a fixer so you fix it*. It feels good actually. You're a great problem solver and a 'get it done already' person. Another day you realize it's wearing on you as they keep coming back for more of their problems to be fixed. They need the fixer. It felt

good to be the fixer—until it didn't.

Then you start to resent that you're fixing stuff for people who don't learn, don't care, or just don't do their job. When that day hits, you're all done fixing. This is the day you let them know in no uncertain terms you have expectations and you mean business. Get to it or get gone.

If you have a pulse and are reading this, you are by definition a study in extremes. It's the human condition…to overly help or under-ly help. And then you try something else. Not helping at all.

You may even recognize you are being extreme. But that's where the justifying goes into full swing. You wouldn't have to do this if *they*…and just like that you're not the problem anymore.

You don't accept justification from the kids in your life or from staff, so why does it seem well, justifiable for you?
Well, ok, you may be thinking, but people need to be held accountable for their actions, and on it goes.

Are we suggesting people shouldn't be held accountable? Of course not.

What we're saying is **what leaders often call accountability** is actually an evidence locker showing where they've done wrong. Or a school progress report showing where they are failing without a plan to teach them to pass.

The super annoying childish stuff gets worse which *ironically* brings you back to help, fix and scold again!

What if there was a way you could get beyond all the situational specifics that just keep you focused on the problems? What if you could make sense of all the crazy, immature, childish stuff going on and see what's really going on and see what's behind this behavior?

With the people problems and reactions swirling around it's easy to see why you haven't a clue what's really going on.

What's worse is that you have proof that *others* are the problem. The only problem with that—it's almost never the full complete picture.

What if you could truly kick all the childish stuff to the curb?

There's a reason for this childish behavior and it's easier to get to the root of than most people think. It does require a click on your mental dial. That initial click is usually the most painful. But it's worth it. It opens up a completely different way of seeing and being.

It's about pausing for 10 seconds and asking yourself some productive questions. Productive questions are questions that come from genuine curiosity and give an invitation to think and make connections about the theme in play. This always begins with you.

Goes something like this:
• Where are you focusing right now?
• What are you feeling about this?
• What's *really* going on?

You can't ask real questions of others you haven't wrestled with yourself. Well, you can, but it's not real. And others feel it. And on some level so do you. And it makes things worse.

Let's kick that default to the curb and curiously ask yourself:
• What's driving you right now?
• What about this situation really gets to you the most?
• What about this person makes you want to bang your head against the wall?
• What triggered your default - your adopted way of being - that made you react?
• What is it about *their ways* that bring about *your ways*?

It's easy to be defensive and continue to let your ego do your justifying.

Curiosity is illogical when you have already made a judgement and you *KNOW* the answer. It feels too hard to listen and see if there's something to learn.

You don't wonder why this is happening or what's really driving this? Nope, you've already decided it's happening because she's passive aggressive or he's just a jerk. You enter each interaction with them or decision regarding them from that point of view.

Chicken or the egg. And what you have on your hands is a real mess that is perpetuated by your lack of curiosity. You talk to them and about them in a *'that's just how they are'* kind of a way. You don't do this on purpose.

You just can't see what you can't see.

When your eyes begin to see you had a choice all along - it's freeing. You get to change your part of the dance.

You now see you've been dancing with them in a way that goes something like:
- Hey, why don't you keep acting the fool and I'll keep writing you up!
  Or
- You keep acting like a fool and I'll respond like a fool - shake on three.

You get to change your part of the dance that gives you **both** a grand invitation to see what's really in play. You get to the **ROOT OF THE PROBLEM**. The root is where the childish stuff breeds. Rip the root out and kick it to the curb. Now go see where your freedom leads you, your team and your organization.