

**RECLAIMING**

# **OUR CALLING**

## **DISCUSSION GUIDE**



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# THIS DISCUSSION GUIDE FEATURES FOUR COMPONENTS FOR EACH CHAPTER:

**Problem of Practice:**

Dialogue about an issue or source of tension. These discussion starters will help you initiate the conversations that matter most right now.

**Featured Questions:**

Delve deeper into the questions that really matter. The author has selected his favorite question from each chapter for you to discuss.

**Character-Based Conversation Starters:**

Connect to the characters and stories within the book on a deeper level. These prompts support additional reflection and growth.

**Bonus Content:**

Supercharge your discussions and enhance your ability to lead meaningful change with bonus content that's not found in the book!

## SHARE YOUR LEARNING AND CONNECT ON OUR COMMUNITY HASHTAG:

## #RECLAIMINGOURCALLING

# PROLOGUE

## Problem of Practice:

Many educators are experiencing an internal tension. This conflict was compared to two bighorn rams locking horns. What would you say each ram represents right now?

## Featured Question:

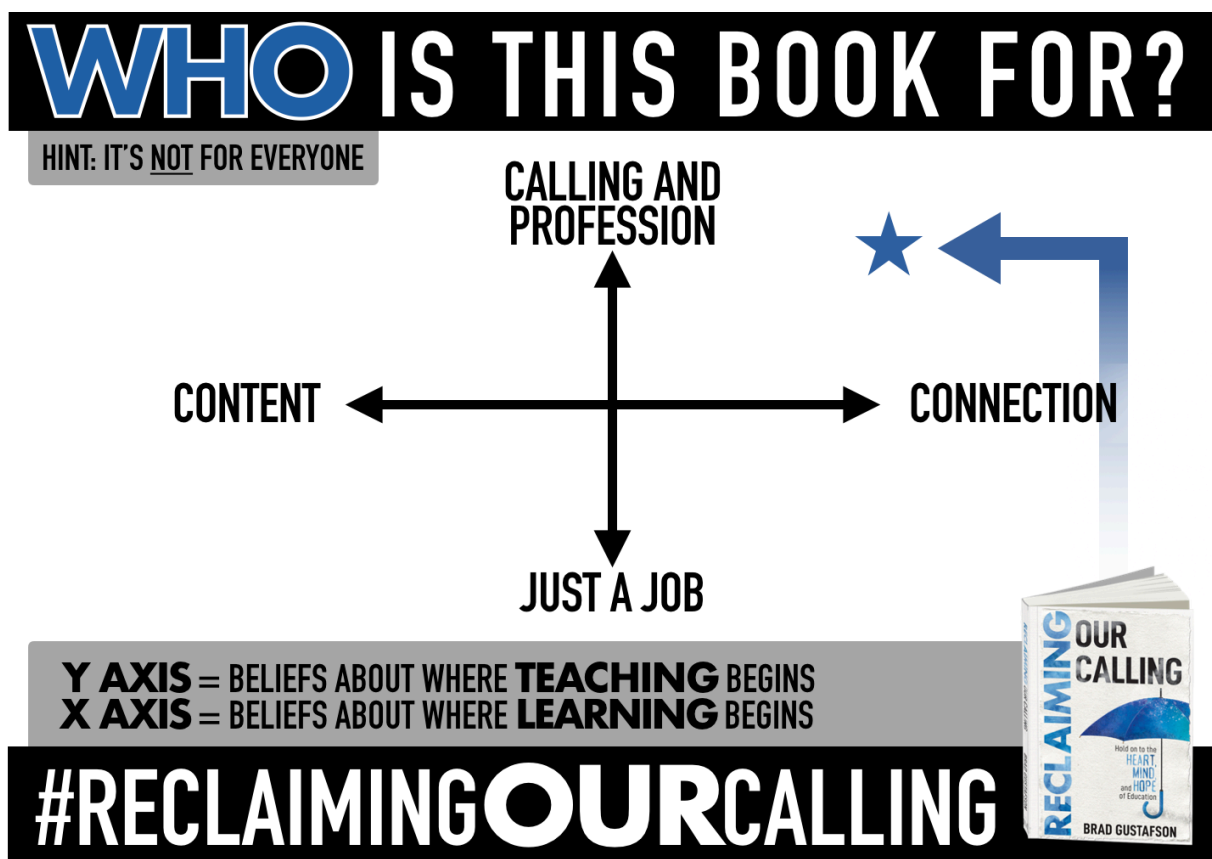
When have you felt conflicted in your work serving students?

## Character-Based Conversation Starters:

How are you and Liz alike? How are you different? How do you know?

## Bonus Content:

Discuss where you see yourself on the two axes, and where you see education as a whole. How have you navigated this tension?



# CHAPTER 1

## **Problem of Practice:**

Sometimes people and schools have unspoken priorities. What are the unspoken priorities you've noticed in your school/work? How have you made your top priorities clear?

## **Featured Question:**

What would school look like if we held the whole learner in the same high regard as high-stakes test scores?

## **Character-Based Conversation Starters:**

What questions do you have about Joey? How would you envision working with him if he were in your classroom or school? What priorities would Joey want to see in his school?

## **Bonus Content:**

Use the template below to jot down your top priorities, or collaborate with your team to jot down some shared beliefs.

<b>BIG 3</b>	<b>ACTION IDEAS</b>
<b>HOW MIGHT YOU EMBED YOUR BIG 3 INTO WORK YOU'RE ALREADY DOING?</b>	



# CHAPTER 2

## **Problem of Practice:**

One of the bigger problems we're seeing is that the people furthest from the classroom don't know what we're *seeing*. How might we help others see what's at the core of this work and why it matters?

## **Featured Question:**

To what degree do the families in your school community know how (and why) you are taking learning deeper?

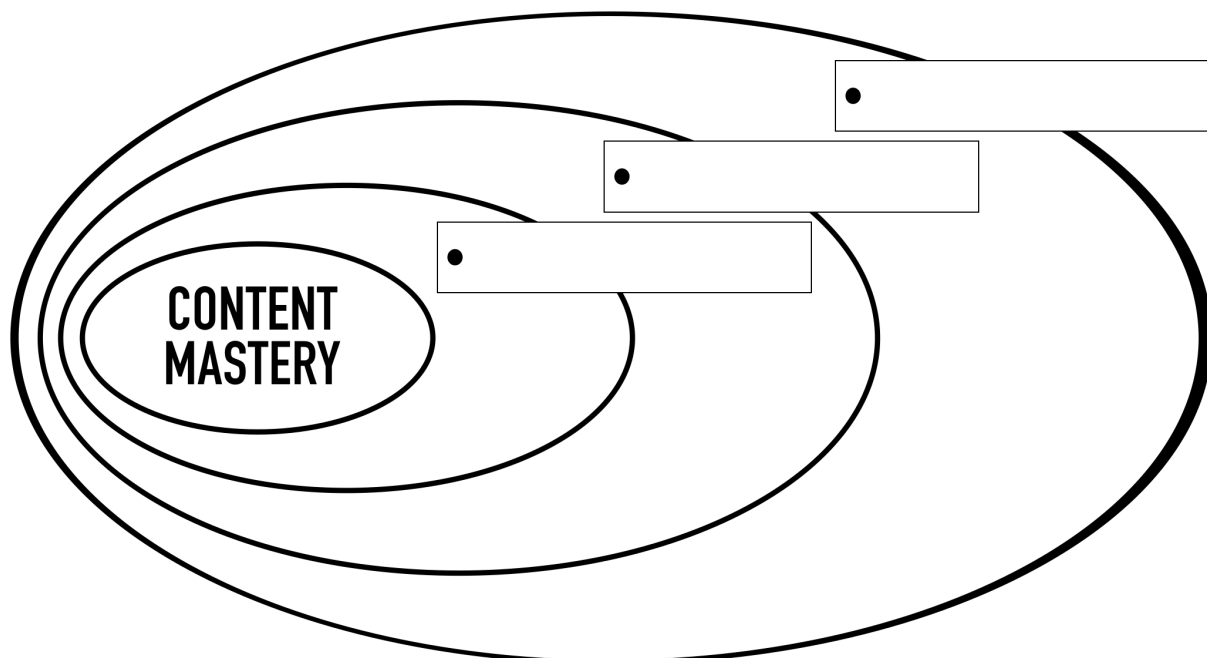
## **Character-Based Conversation Starters:**

Share a story about a teacher who reminds you of Mrs. MacLean.

## **Bonus Content:**

In many respects, the current system has prioritized memorization and content mastery above all else. This often conflicts with what we know about the importance of social-emotional learning and mental health.

What are the other priorities that are crowding out social-emotional learning? Discuss some of the misguided priorities (e.g., beliefs, practices, and systems) that support this troubling paradigm.



# CHAPTER 3

## Problem of Practice:

Sometimes the phrase *teaching the whole learner* (or whole child) gives people the impression we're averse to deeper learning. How would you respond to this notion?

## Featured Question:

Relationships are foundational to learning that lasts. How do you ensure all of the learners you serve are experiencing a sense of belonging?

## Character-Based Conversation Starters:

Mrs. MacLean was able to resist the persistent pull towards surface-level learning. What questions would you ask her?

## Bonus Content:

Teaching the whole learner is more challenging than teaching academics alone. List the specific things you do to take learning deeper.

HOW DO <b>YOU</b> TAKE LEARNING DEEPER?			
RELATIONSHIPS	RELEVANCE	IDENTITY	TRANSCENDENT LEARNING

# CHAPTER 4

## **Problem of Practice:**

“Heart” is one of the most powerful forces in education. Sometimes it can seem like we don’t have the time, space, or permission to tap into the heart. Does this sound familiar? In what ways?

## **Featured Question:**

What can you let go of to create more space for your heart to work?

## **Character-Based Conversation Starters:**

Liz believed people are less interested in being impressed by you and more interested in feeling heard. Where might you apply this wisdom?

## **Bonus Content:**

Throughout the book, you’ll find strategies to reclaim the work you were called to do. Many of these strategies are in an easy-to-read “Try This!” format. Here’s an additional strategy that didn’t make the final manuscript.

## **TRY THIS!**

WE ALL HAVE AT LEAST A COUPLE RESPONSIBILITIES AT WORK THAT WE MIGHT NOT BE SUPER-EXCITED ABOUT. TRY TO REFRAME HOW YOU APPROACH THESE TASKS BY INFUSING MORE HEART OR SOMETHING YOU LOVE. (FOR EXAMPLE, I KNOW A TEACHER WHO COMPLETES REPORT CARDS IN A VERY PURPOSEFUL WAY WITH THE HELP OF STUDENTS).

# CHAPTER 5

## **Problem of Practice:**

Nobody can see everything. We all have blind spots. The danger lies in how our minds fill in these blanks based on our past experiences. This can diminish our efforts to teach and lead change. How might working together enhance your team's vision?

## **Featured Question:**

What if every educator made a list of heartfelt passions and then asked a colleague to help enhance what's on their radar?

## **Character-Based Conversation Starters:**

Mrs. MacLean helped enhance my radar. Who has invested in you and helped you see your calling more clearly?

## **Bonus Content:**

Here's a bonus "Blind Spot" experiment that uses the same directions found in Chapter 5. After you try the experiment, discuss the results with your team as well as how this applies to the work we do in education.



# CHAPTER 6

### Problem of Practice:

Our ability to recognize the status quo decreases when we enter autopilot mode. Which strategy to short-circuit autopilot resonated with you?

### Featured Question:

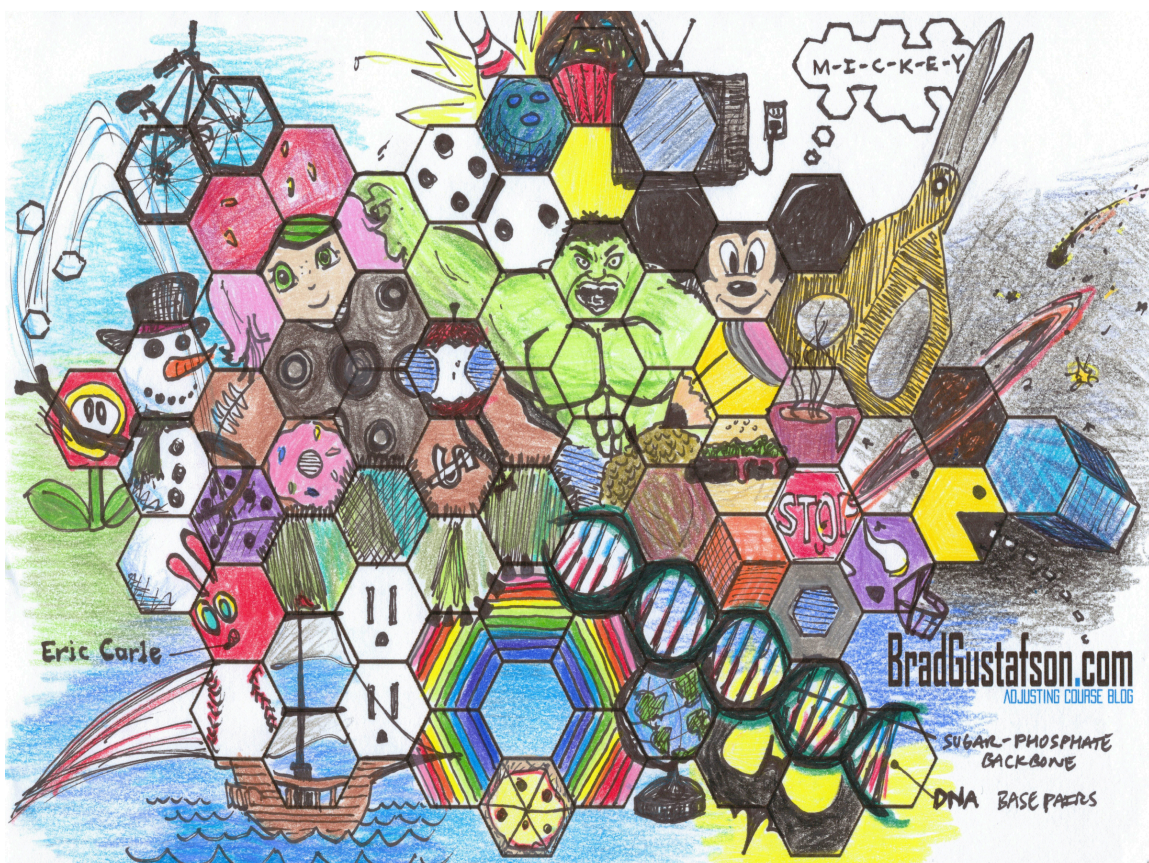
How would the culture of your classroom or school change if you practiced prototyping instead of advocating for a specific solution?

### Character-Based Conversation Starters:

Have you ever experienced a standstill with another person (similar to the epic tennis-court debate Joey and I had)? How did you get unstuck?

## Bonus Content:

The hexagon activity was a quick way to practice prototyping. (You can see how I approached the activity below.) How might rapid prototyping help solve some of the real challenges you and your team are facing?



# CHAPTER 7

## **Problem of Practice:**

Some of us may go an entire week without anyone noticing (or investing in) our strengths. What is one way you could be more intentional about sharing your passions while also noticing the strengths of students and colleagues?

## **Featured Questions:**

What is one skill you possess that you hope others see value in?

## **Character-Based Conversation Starters:**

How has Joey changed over the course of the book? What factors contributed to this evolution and what stands out most?

## **Bonus Content:**

“Find Your Jelly” is a powerful mantra, but it’s important to remember talent is not a fixed asset. A person’s passions and strengths can change over time. Go back and look at Figure 7.4 in the book. What words or phrases point to passion being something we need to *develop*?



# CHAPTER 8

## **Problem of Practice:**

The word *innovation* is used so frequently some consider it a buzzword. How have you made sure innovation (and change) is meaningful?

## **Featured Question:**

How are hope and innovation the same? How are they different?

## **Character-Based Conversation Starters:**

Liz convinced me to make a change that didn't pan out. How might we discern between *change that might be meaningful for students* and *change for the sake of change*?

## **Bonus Content:**

I define innovation as, "...the process and thinking that makes meaningful change possible." With this in mind, how might altering the quote that was introduced earlier in the book change its meaning?

#RECLAIMINGOURCALLING

WHAT WOULD SCHOOL  
LOOK LIKE IF WE HELD  
**INNOVATIVE LEARNING**  
IN THE SAME REGARD AS  
HIGH-STAKES TEST DATA?

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# EPILOGUE

## **Problem of Practice:**

Sometimes it seems like “other people” get to decide who we are as educators and what our legacy will be. In reality, our legacy is determined by what we empower others to do. What are you empowering others to do?

## **Featured Question:**

I’ve heard people with tattoos quip, “I’ll show you mine if you show me yours.” In the same spirit of sharing, what’s your favorite quote or tattoo-mantra?

## **Character-Based Conversation Starters:**

Mrs. MacLean had her share of idiosyncrasies. The fact she embraced them was part of what made her so special. What makes *you* unique?

## **Bonus Content:**

Here’s a tattoo with one of my favorite themes from the book. The most studious thing to do would be to discuss the significance of the quote, but I’d much rather see your ideas for tattoo-quotes! Let’s see what you got at [#ReclaimingOurCalling](#).

