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Compassionate Coaching

How to Help Educators Navigate Barriers to Professional Growth

When we embark on a journey, every action revolves around the destination. Of course, not all trips are smooth sailing. We inevitably hit distractions, obstacles, and detours. These challenges threaten to blow us off course, but when we stay focused on the destination rather than the barriers, we can move forward. The same is true in education. Barriers to effective teaching are neither permanent states nor character traits. Rather, they are temporary challenges successful coaches help teachers overcome by connecting them with the right methods and keeping them focused on the destination. In Compassionate Coaching, Kathy Perret and Kenny McKee identify the six most vexing challenges teachers face—lack of confidence, failure, overload, disruption, isolation, and school culture challenges—and the six corresponding ways that coaches can help teachers surmount them, dubbed the compassionate coaching focus areas. Coaching with compassion is a process focused on partnership, empowerment, prioritization, routine, connection, and openness. Done well, it can result in transformational improvements to student achievement and teacher work satisfaction. In some cases, it can even shift the trajectory of whole schools. Roadblocks and detours can get in our way when we are coaching just as they can during any journey. Instead of grumbling about the setbacks, we can open our eyes to the possibilities of a new and better route. That's what compassionate coaching offers. Let's go!

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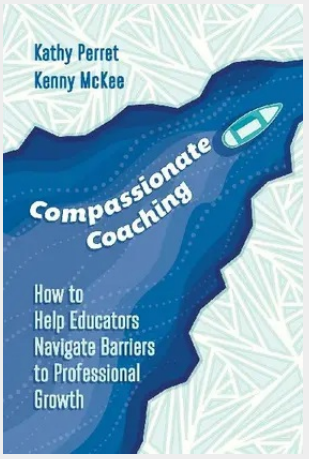

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