Principle One: Purpose Trumps Task

Purpose is the essential foundation on which all other service decisions are developed. Purpose drives everything.

How can we identify our purpose as leaders?

1) **ASK:** Why do you work here?

   - To make a difference
   - The feeling that I belong
   - Love of the work
   - Benefits/Schedule
   - Pay

   We all have multiple reasons for working. This is about your *purpose*, not your task. This is about what you contribute to your community.

   Ask yourself, “why *here*”?

   Ask yourself, “what is my contribution”?

Consider the top level of the pyramid – *to make a difference*. Do you have a Bloom’s Taxonomy Level Six reason? (level six is create)

2) **ASK:** What do you do, specifically that makes a difference?

   **OR** What is your purpose? *(time for individuals to take notes)*

Exercise -- **WRITE:** “My purpose is . . .” (be specific)

- To support student success → How, *exactly* do you support student success?
- “I’m laying bricks” . . . (TASK)
- “I’m building a cathedral” (PURPOSE)

3) **LIST** five tasks you do that you consider important

Now List the reasons they matter
4) **ASK:** What is the legacy you want to leave as a leader at MJC? *(write it down – this is part of your vision)*

5) **NOW,** **Your purpose** – Write a single sentence that describes your purpose at the college: HINT: It is bigger than you. *Examples:*
   - My purpose is to create happiness
   - My purpose is to build a cathedral
   - My purpose is to help every student I encounter feel they belong here
   - My purpose is to make sure students get every class they need

6) **Finally, we need a collective purpose. Why are WE here?**
   
   *(Discuss possible collective purpose ideas. This shouldn’t be decided quickly. Let them think. It can be determined next time)*
   
   Our purpose is to raise the level of educational attainment in our community.
   *(mine 😊)*

**How can we help others develop purpose?**

This exercise can be adapted for each of your departments. Help your staff define their individual purpose, then identify the purpose of your department.

**Purpose is not task. Purpose TRUMPS task.**