

Books



Leading Through Spirals of Inquiry

by
Judy Halbert & Linda Kaser
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Any time Judy Halbert and Linda Kaser embark on something new, we get excited.

We often find ourselves saying, “yes!”, whether it’s Angela’s participation with NOIIE (The Networks of Inquiry and Indigenous Education) at ICSEI (International Congress for School Effectiveness and Improvement) conferences, and learning alongside world-class academics from around the world; or Jim’s fortune in being blown away by the draft copy of *Leading through the Spirals of Inquiry: For Equity and Quality* when he received an invitation to review the book prior to publication.

Judy and Linda are masters at offering up opportunities that will push us forward and continue to support us in developing our craft. For Jim, in leading professional inquiry in his school – and sometimes feeling stuck, stale, and lost in the weeds – *Leading Through the Spirals of Inquiry: For Equity and Quality* was the *exact book that he needed*. It was as if Judy and Linda could read his mind. For Jim, since taking UBC TELP (Transformative Educational Leadership Program) in the same cohort as Ang several years ago, and for Angela,

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since the first weeks of teaching in Pemberton (more years ago), Judy and Linda have been there to nudge us when we needed it most, and this new book rocked our world. Jim sums it up in one heartfelt sentence: we love these ladies.

When we approach our leadership through the Spirals of Inquiry framework, we get curious about our students and ourselves, we make time to learn, we take intentional action, and we check that we've 'moved the needle'. It has been ten years since Judy and Linda published their first Spirals resource, and their brilliant new book, *Leading Through the Spirals of Inquiry: For Equity and Quality* both synthesizes the past decade of cumulative learning from leaders in schools, and grounds their system-improvement framework with practices and case studies from the field. No matter how experienced a leader you may be, this is why you need to have a tattered, highlighted, and annotated copy of *Leading Through the Spirals of Inquiry: For Equity and Quality* on your desk: it leads to fostering better learning outcomes and creating better learning experiences for the students we serve. Angela likens inquiry work to the infinite game, James P. Carse's work that was popularized by Simon Sinek in his own book, aptly titled *The Infinite Game*. No worries if this is coming at you from left field; we simply wanted to add an interesting reference to another book you may want to read, because we are both *fairly* certain that Linda has it on her own 'recommended reads' list!

Leading Through the Spirals of Inquiry: For Equity and Quality provides a foundational understanding in the first chapter, and then dives into the six stages of the framework. Embedded in each of these chapters is an explanation of the stage, followed by stories

from the field that provide contextual examples that address challenges leaders face when they are working to transform systems. The examples provide a strong case for curiosity, teamwork, and working towards what matters most for learners. For school leaders and book club fans alike, the end of each chapter includes clear summaries, questions for leading learning conversations, and leadership actions that lead to more intentionality while leading impact through Spirals. It's a powerful resource that provokes, provides clarity, and pushes leaders and learners to new depths of understanding.

You can imagine that when the two of us took on the important work of designing and co-chairing the 2023 BCPVPA Connecting Leaders Conference in Kelowna this October, the first people we connected with were Judy and Linda. *This is no exaggeration.* We believe that when we are inquiry focused, we can continue to build a strong system rooted in educational leadership, and we believe that leaders need connection through networks, through shared purpose, and through deep learning. We were certain that Judy and Linda would help us to maintain our end goal because they are insatiably curious, want to work with and for world-class education systems, and strive to have all children cross the stage with dignity, purpose, and options. The Spiral of Inquiry will get us there. For those of you able to join us at Connecting Leaders this fall, we can network and do this hard work together.

This book is a thing of beauty, like sipping a great cup of coffee, listening to a perfect album, or biting into a crisp Okanagan apple at Connecting Leaders (spoiler alert).

Get this book. We don't know how else to say it. It really is *that* impressive, and – dare we say – transformative.

Linda and Judy will join Angela, Jim, and many other learning facilitators at the 2023 Connecting Leaders Conference.
Find out more!

