



JUST IN TIME

Weekly Update

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Issue #4

POSITIVE THINKING: THE ANTIDOTE FOR THE NEW NORMAL

The way we teach students in our schools and classrooms has changed almost overnight for educators world-wide; due to the reduction of face-to-face gatherings, handshakes and physical distancing while still fully maintaining the roles and responsibilities for the day. Have you had a chance to think about your mindset in this new normality? Can you lead and learn outside your comfort zone?

So, what barriers can prevent someone, whether an administrator, teacher, cafeteria worker, bus driver, etc., from becoming an effective leader? Examples include wrestling with self-doubt or judging others' motives, admiring the problem instead of solving the problem, or having unrealistic expectations from one's self and others to name a few. None the less, one of the most powerful barriers to overcome is the presence of **negative emotions**. In order to navigate the changes ahead, it will be important for individuals to have a **positive vision** and the self-confidence to tackle unforeseen problems, as well as the courage to confront uncomfortable truths and admit that you might not have all the answers.

BELIEVE YOU CAN
and you're half way there.
Teddy Roosevelt



GETTING UNSTUCK

Negative emotions are every bit as contagious as COVID-19 – and they are also toxic, leading to an emotional sense of uncertainty. Anxiety is often caused by fear of the unknown which can result in our inability to think clearly, to be creative, or to manage our relationships both at work and at home. Now more than ever, it is important for us to recognize our stress responses as an opportunity to pause and reflect on our need for a personal self-care and optimistic approach. On the next page, you'll find suggestions for examining your daily routines, finding a self-mantra, being a rational optimist, visualizing success, and taking positive action. We challenge you to pick one to work on this week to help you get unstuck from negative thoughts and feelings and help with changing your thinking patterns to aid you in achieving inner peace and happiness.



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As previously stated, now more than ever building social and relational connections has never been more important. For this reason, we would like to share with you a short mini professional development video where, BSS Teryl Jones, presents on one of her favorite slides titled, **Seize the Moment, The "Connection" Challenge**. This video challenges listeners to take a few minutes out of their day to connect with someone. By taking on this challenge *together*, we will walk through this season to a brighter future. To gain access to my video, please click on the link below:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YKrBBCwujUQ&feature=youtu.be>

1) Take Positive Action

To create positive change, process the situation and take action; one small step at a time. Whether on a personal level or work related, write out a main goal with specific, smaller micro-goals. For example, a main goal might be to have less negative thinking, thoughts of perfectionism, or anxiety while learning how to cope with the current changes at work. If this is the goal, the micro-goals may be: 1) Take time-outs at work when feeling anxious; 2) Set up a structured daily schedule for home and work; 3) Journal three things you are grateful for each day; 4) Watch and listen to more positive information and 5) Reassess the situation in 30 days. Action Plan Questions: Identify one micro-goal which would promote a positive change in your wellbeing. What would motivate you to successfully complete this goal?

2) Daily Habits, Structure and Routines

Studies have shown that developing good habits is more important to meeting goals than self-control (American Psychological Association) and that daily routines helps individuals to manage stress and feel more productive. On the other hand, a lack of structure and routine can actually deepen feelings of distress on account of one feeling less organized, unproductive, or less in control of their situation. According to Rachel Goldman, psychologist and clinical assistant professor at NYU School of Medicine, “A good place to start with creating a new routine is to set wake-up and bedtimes, as well as meal and activity times.” Daily habits and routines are not the enemy; they are part of the solution. Action Plan Question: Stress can make it hard to concentrate, so what daily routines and habits might help you better focus on what’s important?

3) Fill your Mind with Positive Thoughts

Have you ever woken up late or worried only to have the rest of your day go sour? According to the Mayo Clinic, positive thinking helps manage stress and improves your health. Start each day with a positive affirmation by saying to yourself, “It’s going to be a good day. I got this”. Additional recommended strategies are: trying to find humor in bad situations; focus on the present in order to withstand unrealistic projections; in addition to reframing failure as an opportunity for growth. After all, nobody is perfect. Action Plan Question: What are the top five things you cherish in your life and when was the last time you thought about them?

4) Rational Optimism

According to Shawn Achor, author of the book titled, “The Happiness Advantage”, Rational Optimism means ““a realistic assessment of the present, while maintaining a belief that our behavior will eventually create a better reality.” In other words, *our behavior does matter*. Not to be mistaken for a “Pollyanna”, optimists have the courage to dream about the life they want and the attitude and belief that it can come true. It’s about asking ourselves the question, “What’s the worst that can happen?” as oppose to, “Hoping for the best but expecting the worst.” Action Plan Question: What risk would you take if you knew you could not fail?

5) Visualize Success

Harness the power of visualization by imagining yourself as a successful and effective administrator, teacher or staff member prior to entering your school, and Own It. Picture yourself succeeding in your mind before you actually do it in reality. Did you know that boxing legend Muhammad Ali made it a habit to visualize himself victorious hours before the actual fight took place and that Michael Jordan pictured himself successfully make a basket before he ever took the shot in real life? Action Plan Question: What do you believe is possible for you?