



Pep talks for teachers

Lockdowns, change, anxiety, and more work for teachers.

If 2020 has taught us anything, it is that we know how to be flexible in 2021. But this doesn't change the fact we still have to plan, assess, and report on learning, not to mention ensure the mental health and wellbeing of students and sometimes colleagues and parents. The result is that teachers being educators, counsellors, carers, mediators, assessors, reporters and let's not forget computer technicians when it comes to remote learning.

Basically, teachers must be everything to everybody. But does it have to be this way?

Sometimes we as educators are our own worst enemy with the expectations that we put on ourselves.

Hearing and catching our thoughts can be a powerful way to soften the inner critic that is telling us we need to do more.



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Don't get me wrong, I'm all for going above and beyond when it comes to meeting student needs, but at what cost to our own wellbeing?

There is so much happening globally, and frankly, we are suffering what psychologists call Covid fatigue, a "deep weariness arising from more

than a year of life in a global pandemic" (Waters, 2021).

Parents and students look to their teachers for guidance, support, and strength. But who is caring for you, the teacher?

I repeatedly see teachers pushing themselves with long hours preparing both face to face and remote learning activities. I hear them punish themselves for not doing more, or they respond to self-care initiatives with comments such as "I don't have time for that", "If I don't do this, who will?", "My students need me".

Now, while it's important to be passionate, engaged and committed. There is a line that, when crossed, can move people into thoughts of the Martyr "I have to...", the Victim "I'm told to ..." and the Saboteur "Others need me ...". Hearing and catching our thoughts can be a powerful way to soften the inner critic that is telling us we need to do more. The truth is, the way to do more is to be more, that is, fill your own cup by recognising the amazing work you already do.

Teachers are great at giving pep talks to others to show kindness and care, so I wanted to share a

few affirmations as pep talks to help you reframe your thoughts to ones of self-compassion.

I encourage you to choose one or a few phrases below that resonate for you, write it out and place it somewhere you will see every day.

Share them with others or even put them up on a staff notice board.

Each time you hear your inner critic, affirm to yourself one of the following...

Affirmations for teacher wellbeing

- Whatever gets done or is left undone today, it is enough
- Today I manage my energy, not my time
- I am a human being, not a human doing
- I give myself permission to switch off today as an act of self-care
- I deserve to be cared for just as I care deeply about others
- I can't be everything to everyone - I am enough as I am ★



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