

10 Keys to Happiness

Working in schools can be stressful!

These articles are intended to help the great people who work in schools.

Key points

Who are you going to help this year? Volunteer a couple of hours, once a month to help a cause you are passionate about.

Plan your exercise routine and put it in your diary.

What new skill or interest (not work related) are you going to pursue this year?

Catch yourself comparing yourself with others. Think of all the things you have to be grateful for.

Happiness is not something ready made. It comes from your own actions.

Dalai Lama

The beginning of the school year provides us with an opportunity to start afresh. Many of us return from the break rested, recharged and with great intentions. However maintaining momentum beyond the first term can be difficult.

I find Action For Happiness movement's "*Ten Keys to Happier Living*" useful in providing practical tips and maintaining my focus. For further information visit www.actionforhappiness.org

Do Things For Others – rather than waiting for somebody else on staff to take the initiative and do something for staff welfare this year, be that person. Create a roster for special morning teas, birthday celebrations or a once a term social event.

Connect With People – focus this year on being a great listener. At times we can get so busy with our work in schools that we rush from one task to the next. This year, take time to really connect with a couple of colleagues. Concentrate on taking the time to really listen to how they are and what is happening in their world, away from school.

Take Care of Your Body – establish good exercise routines this year. Whether it is walking the dog, going to the gym or riding a bike, it takes three weeks for an activity to become a habit. Work hard and commit to the activity until it becomes part of your routine. Unfortunately exercise is often the first thing that many people stop doing when they get busy and stressed. Yet exercise is the one thing they should do to reduce and manage that stress.

Notice the World Around – challenging students, colleagues or situations can dominate our thinking. We can at times get caught up in the negative aspects of our work. However there are many great aspects of our work in schools that can go by unnoticed.

Keep Learning New Things – learning something new challenges us and can take us out of a rut. Being engrossed in learning a new skill can take our mind off our current work challenges and can help us keep things in perspective.

Have Goals to Look Forward to – planning your next holiday or a family event gives us something to look forward to. Planning for a holiday can be almost as rewarding as the holiday itself.

Find Ways to Bounce Back – it can be helpful to reflect on whether the problem you are faced with is something that you can do something about. If it is, consider your options and take action. Continuing to procrastinate is probably not helping. If you can't change it, change the way that you think about it.

Take a Positive Approach – being realistic is important but dwelling on the negative doesn't help and can become overwhelming. Look for the positive aspects of a situation.

Be Comfortable With Who You Are – comparing yourself with others is not helpful and can often lead us to feeling unfulfilled. We don't have to "*keep up with the Joneses*". Life is not a contest to be won. Your self-worth should come from within rather than the constant pursuit of 'possessions'.

Be Part of Something Bigger – our work in schools is important. We have the opportunity EVERY day to make a difference in the lives of the families that we work with. Keeping focus on the BIG picture of what we are doing can help us achieve a sense of satisfaction.

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