



Happy Staff = Happy School

Good Intentions Aren't Enough

Working in schools can be stressful!

These articles are intended to help the great people who work in schools to reduce their stress and increase their sense of satisfaction from the important work they do.

Key points

Be realistic about what you expect to achieve in a day.

Teaching and responding to needs are CORE business and take up the bulk of each day. You don't have much flexibility.

THINK - "What ONE thing do I need to achieve today (apart from teaching my lessons and responding to needs) to feel satisfied that I have had a productive day?"

**We are not upset
by things, but
rather by the view
we take of them**

Epictetus

Most of us know what we SHOULD be doing.

We SHOULD do the most important things FIRST!

We SHOULD keep exercising even when we are busy!

We SHOULD stop and eat a healthy lunch!

We SHOULD drink more water!

We SHOULD be more positive and optimistic in the staffroom!

At times we 'SHOULD' all over ourselves!

Having good intentions isn't enough - it's your behaviour that counts! To reduce our stress levels we need to have the discipline to stick to the things we KNOW we SHOULD do.

Our own thought processes and self-talk have a significant impact on our stress level. We virtually 'beat ourselves up' for what we haven't done or what we 'should' do.

The first step is to have reasonable expectations of ourselves and what can realistically be achieved within a day. One of the challenges of teaching is that we have a number of commitments each and every day. Our time with students IS our core job. This fixed component of our day limits the flexibility for completing the other things we endeavour to do.

Days in schools can also be unpredictable. We never know what issues or concerns arise from students, parents or other staff. We can become resentful of these 'interruptions'. However helping to address these issues is also part of our core business.

It is important NOT to have unrealistic expectations of what can be achieved in one day. There will be issues that arise that we hadn't anticipated. Recognising and acknowledging at the end of the day that there were priorities that we had to deal with that we had not expected helps us appreciate what we have achieved.

Part of the problem of job stress is that it can become a cycle. Being unrealistic about what you can accomplish in one day can lead to further frustration and a snow-balling affect. This then leads to more negative self-talk, an increase in your stress and a decline in the quality of your work.

Be realistic in planning what you need to achieve in that day. There will be unexpected events - allow for that. A great question to ask is, "If I could only achieve ONE thing today (apart from teaching my lessons and responding to the core demands on teachers) what does that need to be to feel satisfied?"

Having the discipline to DO what you SHOULD is vital. Good intentions are not enough, it is what you DO that counts!

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