

## Wellbeing – A Decisive Element

As teachers we  
must remember  
the power of  
our words



**H**ave you had one of those days where things kept going wrong?

Have you ever noticed how quickly someone can upset you?

The impact of our choice of language, actions and behaviours is immense, setting the tone for the situation, reaction or discussion ahead. As teachers we must remember the power of our words. Haim G Ginott phrased it beautifully in saying, *“I’ve come to a frightening conclusion that I am the decisive element in the classroom. It’s my personal approach that creates the climate. It’s my daily mood that makes the weather. As a teacher, I possess a tremendous power to make a child’s life miserable or joyous. I can be a tool of torture or an instrument of inspiration. I can humiliate or heal. In all situations, it is my response that decides whether a crisis will be escalated or de-escalated and a child humanized or dehumanized.”*

Whilst there seems a lot of pressure in these words they are equally important for parents and leaders of organisations. Being the “decisive ele-

ment” reminds us of the control we have in creating an environment where other will be welcomed, feel comfortable to be vulnerable and be heard. The skills to achieve this are great and need constant focus, refinement and dedication to achieve success.

### Working at our best

To work to our potential with the capacity to engage with positivity, to be patient in our interactions and have a genuine consideration for those we are working with, we need a number of elements.

- Rest and recovery – Teaching is arduous and exhausting, you need time in your day, week and term to re-energise to have the mental space to connect the right words and responses to varied situations and personalities.
- Compassion – Educating others requires empathy of their world, capability, potential and needs. By leading with compassion we are in a better position to build trust and respect with those around us.
- Conviction – Working with passion and purpose

- **e-Shortcuts** – Wisdom for successful school leadership and management
- **e-Leading** – Management strategies for school leaders
- **e-Technology** – Technology in the classroom
- **e-Early Learning** – Thinking on early learning

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helps us to be driven to achieve our goals. We are better positioned to feel connected and so see value in our day's work.

- Direction and growth – Being committed to the present is essential; having a vision for your future is equally important as it helps you to re-focus through challenges, direct your work and benefit from the stumbling blocks you face.

#### Working under pressure

The most organised, efficient and patient person faces pressure at some point and will need to re-group as they work out how to address the burdens faced to progress beyond that time. As such we need to consider our response to these negative situations to respond with optimism.

- Acceptance – Acknowledge that the difficult moment or issue will pass and that the situation is temporary. Avoid entering into a defeatist mindset of exasperation.
- Break it down – Consider the steps required to move past this point. What will help you to manage the current workload and so progress beyond that time?
- Forward plan – Aim to be proactive with as much of your workload as possible. Diarise time for activities that commonly create stress for you. Report writing, administration or large school events can all add to our feelings of stress.
- Breathe – Take time to briefly step out of the situation to come back with fresh eyes, if you can walk, swim or exercise to re-energise before facing the demands again.

#### Feeling demotivated or disrespected

Feeling recognised and appreciated is key to being motivated and positive in our lives. Be it our family, work colleagues or students, we need to see that we are making an impact, valued and important to victory. To set yourself up well, consider:

- How you like to be validated or recognised
- Establishing self-gratitude to support acknowledgement of personal growth, achievements or outcomes
- Positive relationships where you can validate others and they can recognise your gifts
- When you are demotivated and what it is that is impacting you
- Elements within your area of control or influence. Ensure you have the option of feeling positive.

#### The impacts of poor health

Negative health conditions will create a drain on our capacity to be patient, rested or accessible. Be it family, yourself or friends, mental and physical health problems can cause great stress and anguish as you seek to restore, resolve or manage the conditions. To work towards positive wellbeing assess your:

- Exercise program – Whatever will help you to

improve or maintain your fitness

- Nutrition and food intake – Look for options that will have sustained energy rather than quick fixes
- Fluid intake – Use a bottle so you can see how much water you drink each day. Be aware of and reduce the caffeine, alcohol and sweet drinks you consume
- Medical advice – Ensure you have a qualified professional to assist you on your path
- Support networks – friends, associations, online platforms are all great to provide a sense of community and connection when remote, lonely or unwell
- Balance – When caring for others with health problems, prioritise your health so that you have the energy to nurture them.

#### Technology and wellbeing

Technology is a wonderful tool to support our lives in so many areas; equally it can consume our time, impact on our relationships and invade our rest. Ensure technology is a benefit in your life by ensuring you:

- Have guidelines around device use in your work and home life
- Model the behaviours you want from your students, children or colleagues
- Are comfortable without devices on occasions
- Focus on the task at hand, avoiding distraction and interference
- Are in control of the technology, not the other way around
- Have a set time to switch off to give you time with your partner, family or self before bed
- Enjoy dedicated time each day with people you care for or enjoy
- Get active each hour, avoid being stuck at a desk or screen for extended periods.

We all want to enjoy what we do, who we are with and where we go each day. Reflect on what is working in your world to assist you in thriving in your current world and so being your best. For areas you notice in disarray or disparity, identify steps towards change to improve your world. As you complete those steps, identify your improvements, enjoy people around you, challenge yourself to grow towards your aspirations. Being kind to yourself in accepting what you are with awareness of areas to develop will support you in creating the most positive impact within your relationships, workplace and home life.

“We need to strengthen such inner values as contentment, patience and tolerance, as well as compassion for others. Keeping in mind that it is expressions of affection rather than money and power that attract real friends, compassion is the key to ensuring our own well-being.”

**Dalai Lama**