

Extreme Teacher Self-Care

*How Self-Compassion Diminishes Stress & Cultivates
Compassion and Connection with Our Students*





“There is a **KINDNESS** that dwells
deep down in things; it presides
everywhere, often in places we least
expect.”

[john o'donohue]



“Judgment is the constant evaluation of things as right or wrong, good or bad. When you are constantly evaluating, classifying, labeling, analyzing, you create a lot of *turbulence* in your internal dialogue.”

[Deepak Chopra]

The Judging Mind

Top Stress Producing Irrational Beliefs of Teachers

- ★ *I must have constant approval from students, other teachers, administrators, and parents.*
- ★ *Events in my teaching and classroom should always go the way I want them to go.*
- ★ *Students should never be frustrated.*
- ★ *Students who misbehave deserve punishment.*

Larrivee, B. (2012). *Cultivating teacher renewal: Guarding against stress and burnout*. R&L Education



Top Stress Producing Irrational Beliefs of Teachers

- ★ *There should be no discomfort or frustration at school.*
- ★ *I must be in total control of instruction at all times.*
- ★ *I must find the perfect solution to all problems*
- ★ *I must be a perfect teacher and never make mistakes.*

Thoughts are just things



1. Only I can upset myself, and I do that with my self-talk.
2. My self-talk is learned, and I can learn to use different self talk.
3. Although it may be difficult to change old patterns, with awareness, effort, and persistence, I can change these negative thought patterns.
4. Ultimately, I can learn to regulate the nature, intensity, and duration of my emotional response to my thoughts.

4 GUIDING ASSUMPTIONS ABOUT SELF TALK

BY BARBARA LARRIVEE (CULTIVATING TEACHER RENEWAL)



Self- Compassion creates a

MENTAL SPACE

to recognize the broader human
context of one's experience and to put
things into perspective. (K. Neff)

- ★ A feeling that arises when you are confronted with another's suffering
- ★ When you feel *for* another (not *with* them)
- ★ When you feel motivated to relieve the suffering of another
- ★ You strongly feel sorry for the state of another without attempting to know how they are feeling
- ★ A sympathetic feeling towards another without understanding the intensity of another's suffering
- ★ Approach another's feelings from our point of view
- ★ Only need basic understanding of another's situation to have compassion for them

COMPASSION



Compassion Fatigue

- extreme state of tension or preoccupation with suffering of those being helped to the degree it can create secondary traumatic stress.

<http://www.compassionfatigue.org>

Recognizing COMPASSION FATIGUE

- Excessive blaming
- Bottling up emotions
- Isolation from others
- Receives unusual amounts of complaints from others
- Voices excessive complaints about administrative functions
- Substance abuse
- Overeating, oversleeping, overdoing....
- Poor self-care
- Sleep problems
- Emotional and mental fatigue
- Preoccupation
- Denial
- Lack of flexibility with peers
- Inability to work together as a team

[Compassion Fatigue Awareness Project; www.compassionfatigue.org]



Human Service Professionals: 2 Essential SELF-CARE Practices

1. GROUND Yourself with your BREATH

- i. Center in the now- you are always okay here.
- ii. Which emotions are mine? Which emotions are theirs?
- iii. Allow the emotions to be felt and pass on through (*FEEL, Release, FEEL, Release, FEEL, Release*)
- iv. Constant vigilance on the thinker-- where are the thoughts going? What emotions is the thinking mind triggering AFTER the encounter with the individual? BRING IT BACK TO THE NOW.

2. Practice SELF-COMPASSION & Loving Kindness

- i. Mindfulness (*"I'm anxious, stressed..."*)
- ii. Common Humanity (*"Anyone would feel like this now..."*)
- iii. Kindness to self (*"I am doing the best I can given..."*)



“There is really no limit to the practice of loving kindness in meditation or in one’s life. It is an ongoing, ever-expanding realization of interconnectedness.”

[Jon Kabat-Zinn]

