

Cut YOURSELF Some Slack

Working in schools can be stressful!

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

Key points

Monitor your self-talk

Many people OVER estimate what can be achieved in a short period of time

Ensure that your expectations of what you can achieve today are realistic

Prioritise and focus on doing the key task first

Reflect at the end of the day about what you achieved, NOT what still needs to be done

Kindness in words creates confidence.

Kindness in thinking creates profoundness.

Kindness in giving creates love.

Lao Tzu

That little voice inside your head is powerful! It can be harsher than your toughest critic. What we say to ourselves has a significant affect on our stress levels, especially at this time of the year.

Last week's article highlighted the importance of cutting OTHER people some slack. Take care not to be too judgmental of others and give them the benefit of the doubt, where possible. We don't always know what is going on in other people's lives and we should try to be forgiving.

It is just as important that we have reasonable expectations of ourselves. We need to monitor our self-talk and ensure that we are being fair to ourselves, particularly when we are running low on reserves at the end of the year. Be kind to yourself and have realistic expectations.

Research indicates that most people OVER estimate what we can achieve in a short period of time eg 30 minutes or a day. As a result, many of us are very ambitious when we plan our day. We presume that a particular task can be completed in a short period of time and therefore create unrealistic expectations of what can be achieved in a day. This is then reflected in an almost possible to achieve TO DO list, that sets us up for inevitable failure.

The same research also identifies that most people UNDER estimate how much can be achieved in longer periods of time eg what can be achieved in a year. Being aware of how much you have achieved over the year is helpful and creates a positive mindset that we are making progress.

Schools are busy places because we work with so many people, and people are unpredictable. It is essential that we do the best that we can, with the time and energy that we have. It is vital that we use our time well, by not only identifying the key tasks to be achieved, but also identifying the best time when we can tackle that task with the least interruptions and the most focus.

Many people find tackling the main task first, before the rest of the day becomes hijacked, to be particularly helpful. That way, if the rest of their day is crazy they will have at least achieved a key task.

The following strategies are keys to managing the stress that we put on ourselves through our self-talk:-

- 🎯 *Ensure your expectations of what can be achieved today are realistic,*
- 🎯 *Prioritise and do the most important task in your 'prime' time*
- 🎯 *Avoid multi-tasking by focusing on one key task at a time and*
- 🎯 *Reflect at the end of each day on what you DID achieve today, NOT what you still have left to do.*

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