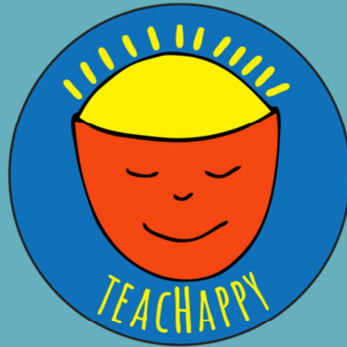


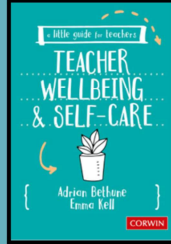
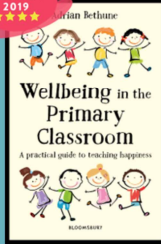
Wellbeing In The Primary Classroom

October 2022



@AdrianBethune

Teaching, writing & training



**Can school
make you happier?**

Overview:

- What is happiness and wellbeing?
 - Why does wellbeing matter?
- Promoting pupil wellbeing – tribal classrooms, mindfulness, rewiring the negativity bias
- Staff wellbeing – practise what you preach, small things consistently done





Psychologists: subjective wellbeing – an assessment of your overall life satisfaction, and your experience of positive and negative emotions

Psychological wellbeing: people's sense of meaning and purpose and engagement with life.

Paul Dolan – it is your experience of pleasure and purpose over time.

It includes all of the emotions – positive and negative. We cannot feel 'happy' all of the time. Moments of loss, heartache, pain. Happiness involves your ability to deal with life's difficulties and overcome them.

Parents want their children to be happy

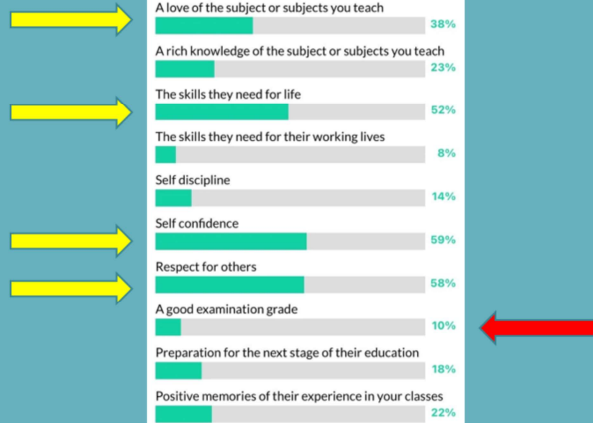
“64% of parents believe their children’s wellbeing is more important than their academic attainment” (YouGov, 2021)



Teachers want their pupils to be happy



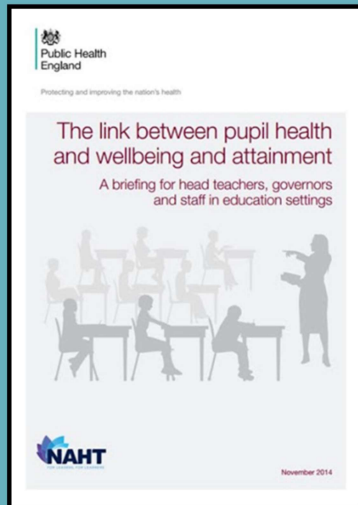
If you could leave the students you teach with only **THREE** positive outcomes, which would they be?



7,686 responses on 6th November 2021



Happier children learn better



<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-link-between-pupil-health-and-wellbeing-and-attainment>

<https://oxfordimpact.oup.com/home/wellbeing-impact-study/>

Happier children -> happier adults



<https://whatworkswellbeing.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/www-briefing-origins4.2.pdf>

Why is teaching happiness important?

**Teachers
have a major
impact**

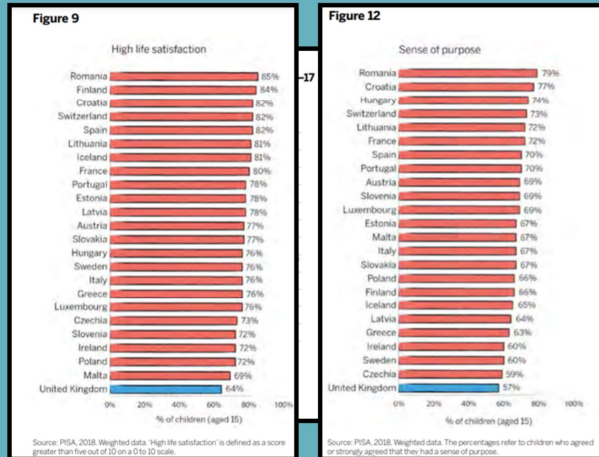


**on children's
happiness
whilst at school.**



https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_hCqmfCkM0g

Why is teaching happiness important?



<https://www.childrenssociety.org.uk/information/professionals/resources/good-childhood-report-2021>

Creating Tribal Classrooms

- **We need others to develop** – we are a tribal species
- **Humans have mostly lived in tribal-based societies** – majority of last 100,000 years
- **Teachers can tap into students' primitive social instincts** – fostering attachment-based relationships

The Social Neuroscience of Education



Optimizing Attachment & Learning in the Classroom

LOUIS COZOLINO



What makes a good team?



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sL9EcVs0adw>

Create tribal classrooms

- **What makes a good team?**
- **Class values** - honesty, kindness, respect, hard-work, perseverance, teamwork
- **Create a class flag** – a symbol of unity (Dr Rob Lowe). Everyone belongs, is valued and has a role to play.
- **The values are a work in progress**



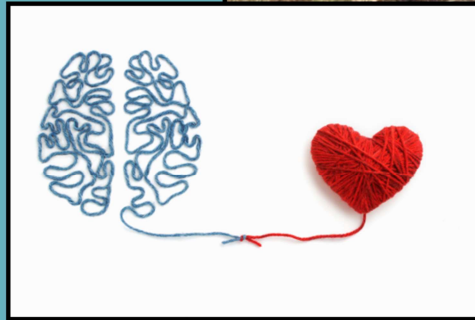
Team flags – an invitation to be creative



ACEs and resilience -

[http://www.wales.nhs.uk/sitesplus/documents/888/ACE%20&%20Resilience%20Report%20\(Eng_final2\).pdf](http://www.wales.nhs.uk/sitesplus/documents/888/ACE%20&%20Resilience%20Report%20(Eng_final2).pdf)

Storytelling, tribes and wellbeing



<https://www.pnas.org/content/118/22/e2018409118>

This study looked into the effects of storytelling in children admitted to an intensive care unit. We found that, compared with an active control condition, one storytelling session with hospitalized children leads to an increase in oxytocin, a reduction in cortisol and pain, and positive emotional shifts...

What does this look like from a child's perspective?

When people think of a class they think of a room of children in a school. I think my class here at JSL is much more than that. The children I sit next to. We have a bond. We trust each other, we help each other and we learn together. We know we can ask each other for help. We are definitely more than a room of children.

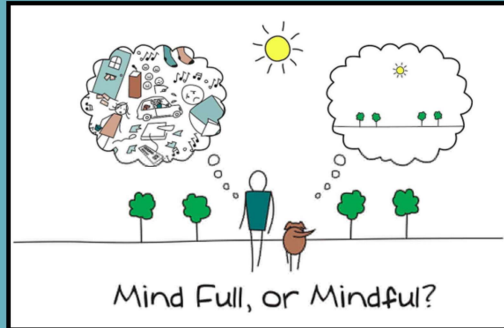


How can you foster a sense of tribe
among the children you teach?



What is mindfulness?

- Paying attention in the present moment
- To what's happening in your mind, body and external environment
- With an attitude of kindness, care and curiosity
- The opposite of mind-wandering



A wandering mind is an unhappy mind study -
https://greatergood.berkeley.edu/images/uploads/A_Wandering_Mind_Is_an_Unhappy_Mind.pdf

Any evidence?

A meta-analysis of RCTs showed significant positive effects of MBIs on:

- Mindfulness
- Executive Functioning
- Attention
- Depression
- Anxiety/Stress
- Negative Behaviours



(Dunning, et al. 2018)



<https://acamh.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/jcpp.12980>

Mindfulness – MYRIAD trial

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School mindfulness lessons don't work for teenagers, study says

By Michelle Roberts
Digital health editor

© 13 July



Mindfulness – MYRIAD trial

- Mindfulness improved the school climate. Improved school climate is associated with **better mental health**
- It improved **teacher wellbeing** and those who did the training reported lower levels of burnout.
- Overall, it was no more effective than normal PSHE lessons (but over **80% of students didn't engage with mindfulness outside of class**).
- Children who had **the best teachers**, did the most practice and showed **better mental health**.
- It didn't work well for teens with **pre-existing mental health difficulties**.



<https://myriadproject.org/what-we-did/what-did-we-find/>

Mindfulness – what now?

- Good quality teacher-training is essential
- Mindfulness should be invitational
- Know your children well
- Make reasonable adjustments
- Make the practices light-touch and fun



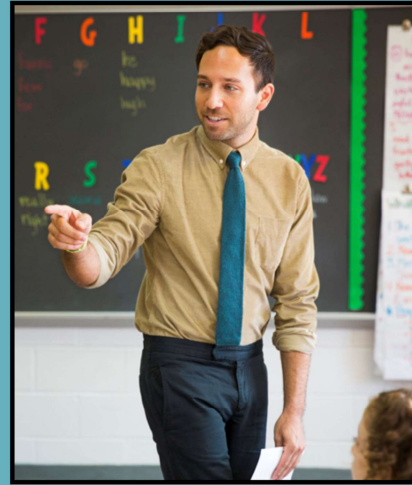
Mindfulness practice



Mindfulness and teachers

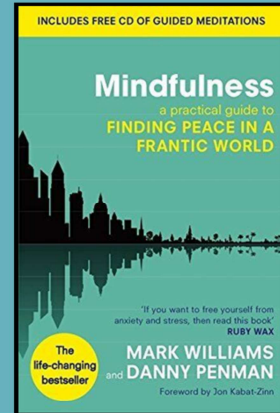
“Effects of mindfulness-based interventions on teachers' wellbeing and performance demonstrate positive relations with participation in mindfulness practice. Those who practise mindfulness are better for it.”

Hwang et al, (2017)



https://www.researchgate.net/publication/316560945_A_systematic_review_of_mindfulness_interventions_for_in-service_teachers_A_tool_to_enhance_teacher_wellbeing_and_performance#:~:text=of%20effect%20sizes.-,Hwang%20et%20al.,overall%20perceived%20distress%2C%20and%20anxiety.

Resources for staff

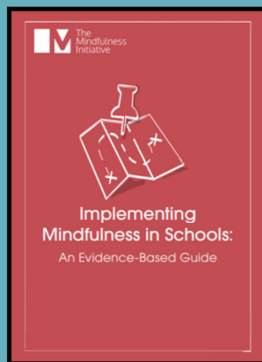


<https://www.bemindfulonline.com/>

<https://www.headspace.com/educators>

<https://www.amazon.co.uk/Mindfulness-practical-guide-finding-frantic/dp/074995308X>

Implementing mindfulness in schools



<https://www.themindfulnessinitiative.org/implementing-mindfulness-in-schools-an-evidence-based-guide>

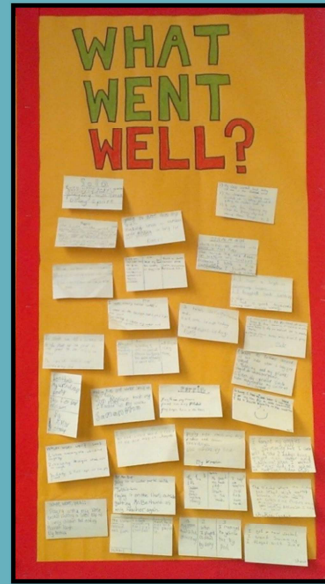
Negativity bias



<https://www.teachappy.co.uk/post/teachappy-vlog-dr-rick-hanson>

What went well?

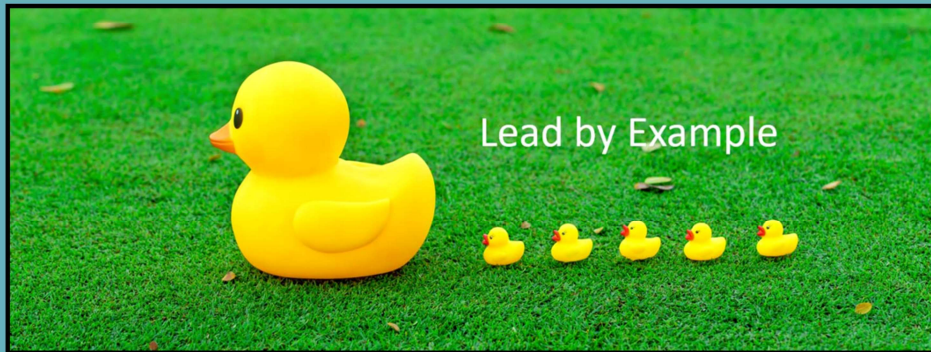
- **What went well?** – reflect on successes and things we've enjoyed
- **Share as a class** – celebrate your team's positives
- **End week on a high** – peak-end rule (Kahneman, 1996)



Peak-end theory was created by the Nobel Prize-winning Israeli psychologist Daniel Kahneman. His definition is as follows:

“The peak-end rule is a psychological heuristic in which people judge an experience largely based on how they felt at its peak (i.e. its most intense point) and at its end, rather than based on the total sum or average of every moment of the experience.”

Staff wellbeing

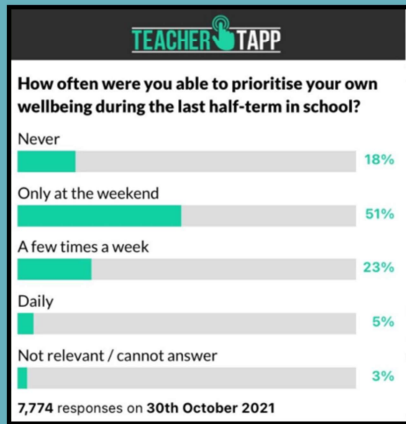


Lead by Example

“Children learn far more from their caregivers’ unconscious behaviours, than any of their conscious manipulations.” Prof. Alison Gopnik



'Prioritise' wellbeing



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DOING NOTHING AT ALL
VS
MAKING SMALL CONSISTENT EFFORTS:
 $(1.00)^{365} = 1.00$
 $(1.01)^{365} = \underline{\underline{37.7}}$

You make it a priority to do small things each day that support your wellbeing.

What small, regular things can you do daily/weekly to support your own wellbeing?

Blog - <https://www.teachappy.co.uk/post/prioritising-your-wellbeing-what-it-means-and-why-we-all-should-be-doing-it>

In summary



- **Wellbeing** - a key to learning and future happiness, can be taught and schools and teachers have a huge influence on children's wellbeing.
- **Create tribal classrooms** – foster that sense of belonging, help children feel part of a team/community, create emotionally positive school cultures.
- **Be mindful** – a new way of relating to your experience. **Give it a go yourself first** and then start to introduce into school.
- **Rewire the negativity bias** – regularly notice and savour the small positives with the children, colleagues and your families. Help children see that they're making progress. Celebrate the small wins!
- **Your wellbeing** - you are a significant role model in children's lives. BUT, your wellbeing matters in and of itself. Do small regular things to support your wellbeing, make them a priority and set a positive example.

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