

Wellbeing In The Primary Classroom

Jan 2023



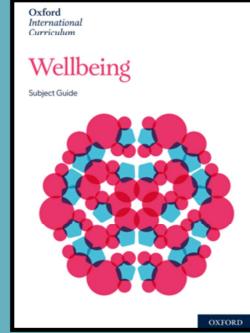
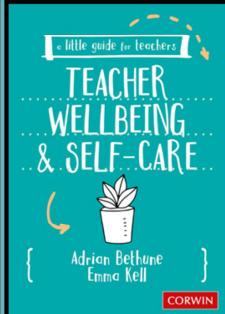
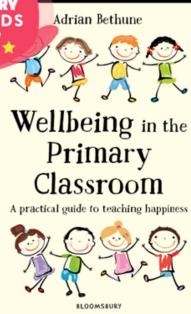
@AdrianBethune



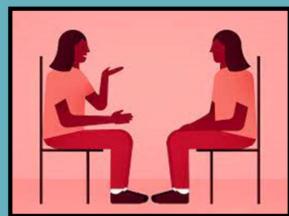
@Teachhappyuk

Teaching, writing & training

teach
PRIMARY
AWARDS
2019
★★★★★



To get the most from today:



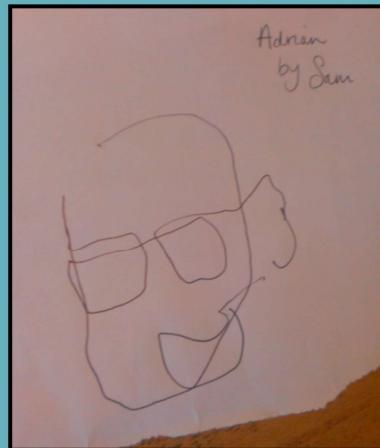
Overview:

- What is happiness and wellbeing?
 - Why is wellbeing important?
- Promoting pupil wellbeing – tribal classrooms, stretch zone, physical activity & acts of kindness
 - Modelling wellbeing



1 min portrait:

- You have 1 min to draw a portrait of your partner.
- You are **not** allowed to look down at the paper.



Positive emotions

"The positive brain has a biological advantage over the negative or neutral brain."



"Positive emotions change the brain and they build your reserves and your resilience"

Prof. Barbara Fredrickson

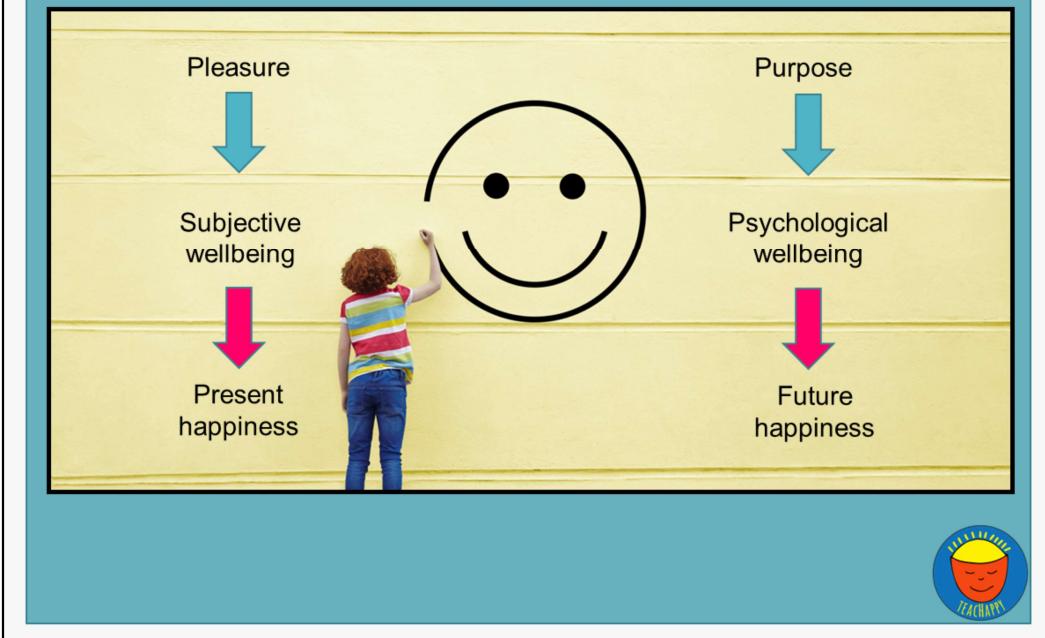


Love, laughter, joy, calm, awe, gratitude, interest, hope, pride, inspiration

We become more creative, flexible in our thinking, better at problem solving.

Positive emotions change how the brains works – we take in more information and see more – they literally widen our perspective.

What is happiness & wellbeing?



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.

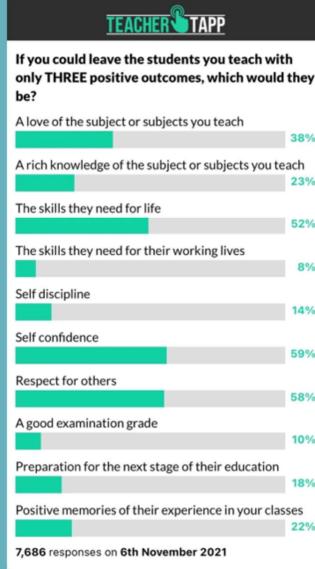
It includes all of the emotions – positive and negative. We cannot feel 'happy' all of the time. Moments of loss, heartache, pain. Happiness involves your ability to deal with life's difficulties and overcome them.

Parents want their
children to be happy

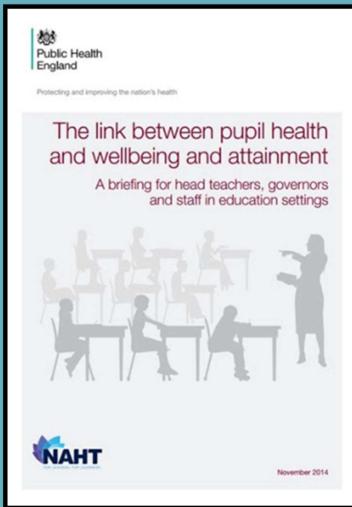
“64% of parents believe their children’s wellbeing is more important than their academic attainment” (YouGov, 2021)



Teachers want their pupils to be happy



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>

Teachers do make a difference

Teachers
have a major
impact

on children's
happiness
whilst at school.



Can School Make You Happier Animation

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

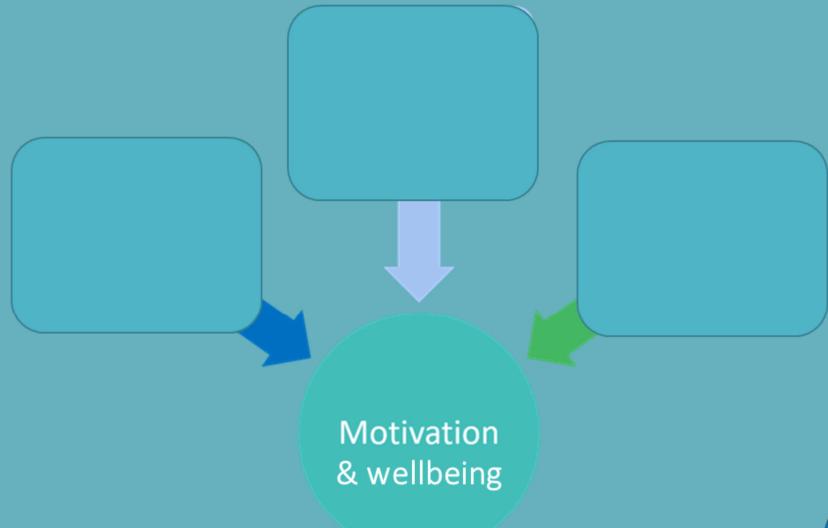
Why is teaching happiness important?

Figure 2: Trends in children's happiness with life as a whole, UK, 2009-10 to 2019-20



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

3 keys to motivation & wellbeing



Deci & Ryan, 2008



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

Belonging

Increasing a sense of belonging in school is associated with:

- Higher student motivation
- Increased wellbeing
- Better student attainment
- Reduced student absence
- Increased staff wellbeing & motivation

(Riley, et al, 2020)

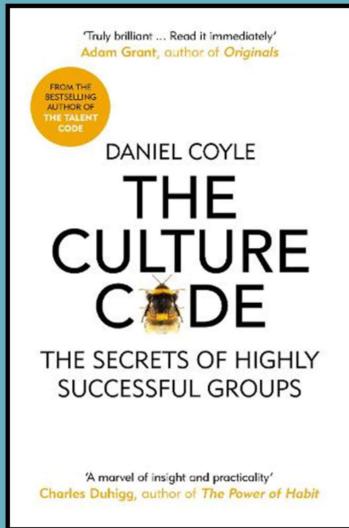


<https://www.ucl.ac.uk/ioe/news/2020/nov/research-shows-sense-belonging-important-pupils-learning-and-behaviour>

Belonging is the sense of being somewhere you can be confident that you will fit in and feel safe in who you are

Pupils who are most satisfied with their lives have a strong sense of belonging at school
PISA 2018

Belonging



- We are safe
- We are connected
- We share a future



Belonging cues

“Belonging needs to be continually refreshed and reinforced.”



- Verbal and non-verbal signals that let people know they are safe, connected and share a future.



How you greet students

How you give feedback

How you deal with challenging behaviour

Your interactions with students in and around school – the ‘micro moments’

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



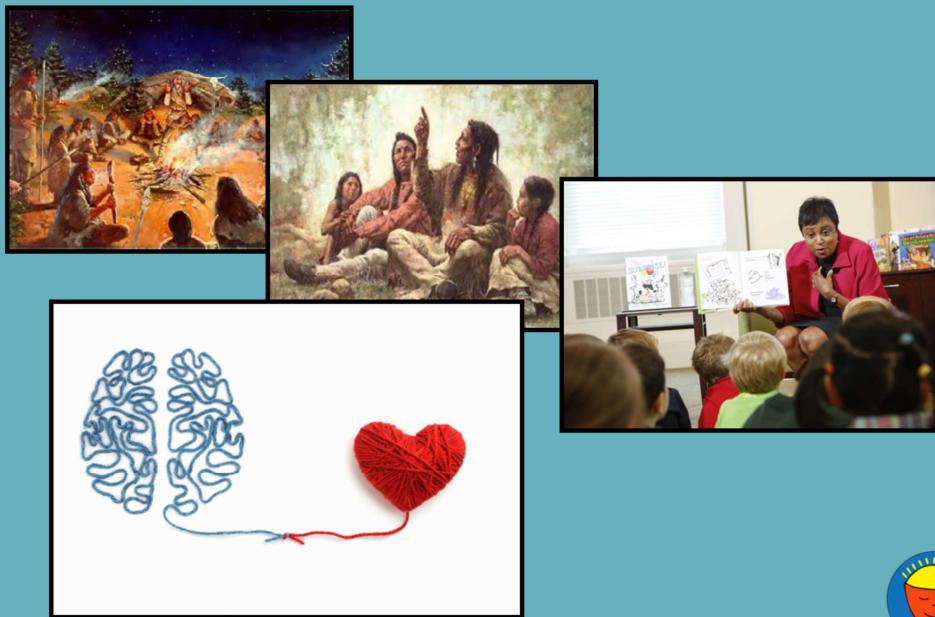
Public Health Wales report in ACEs -

[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)

Team flags – an invitation to be creative



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 our class here at JSL is 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?



The Stretch Zone

It will feel hard & challenging

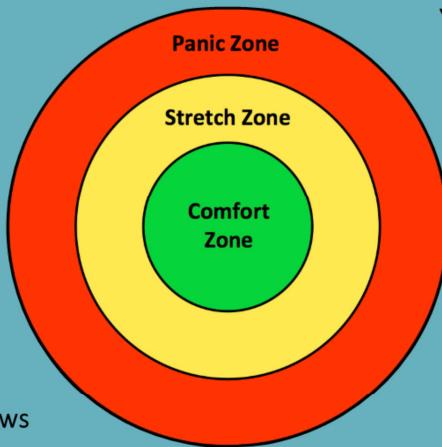
You will feel discomfort

Overtime your comfort zone grows

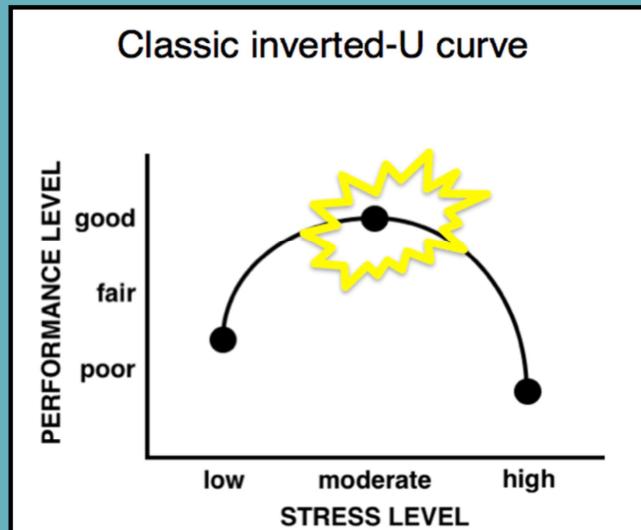
You will make mistakes

It can also feel exciting

Can experience flow



We need stress to learn & perform



(Yerkes & Dodson, 1908)



<https://www.healthline.com/health/yerkes-dodson-law#optimal-arousal-or-anxiety>

From humble acorns...



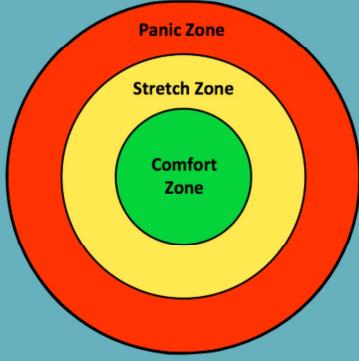
Andrea Spendolini-Sirieix

- 2x National Champion,
- 2x Commonwealth Champion,
- 2x European Champion
- Junior World Champion



What happens if you panic?





Trust and safety
(part of a team)

Break it down

Experience success

Support when they panic

Get comfortable with
being uncomfortable



Normalise discomfort

Nerves

Negative thoughts – ‘I can’t do this!’



Butterflies in tummy

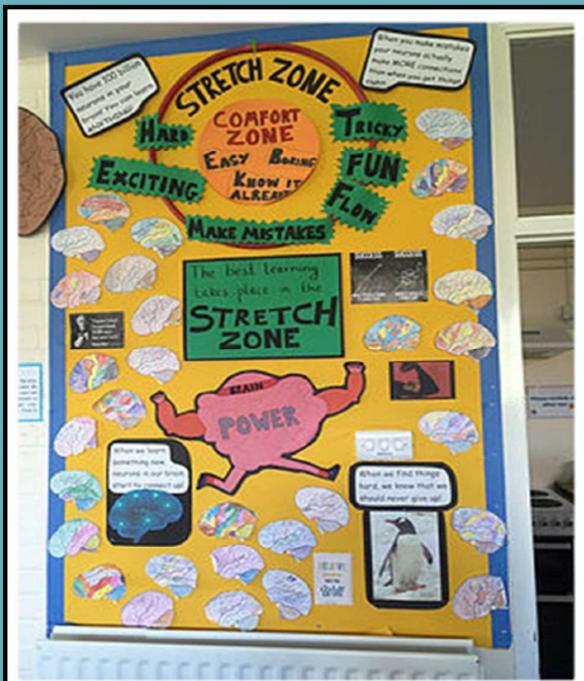
Heart racing,
sweaty,
dry mouth



Teach about neuroplasticity



Meet your brain animation <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RVagiTBMtlo>



Tailor your feedback

“Ultimately, when you know your students and your students trust you, you can ignore all the “rules” of feedback. Without that relationship, all the research in the world won’t matter.”

Prof. Dylan Wiliam



Feedback blog by Dylan Wiliam - <https://www.dylanwiliamcenter.com/2014/11/29/is-the-feedback-you-are-giving-students-helping-or-hindering/>

How can you help children enter
the stretch zone more often?



Children are not moving enough

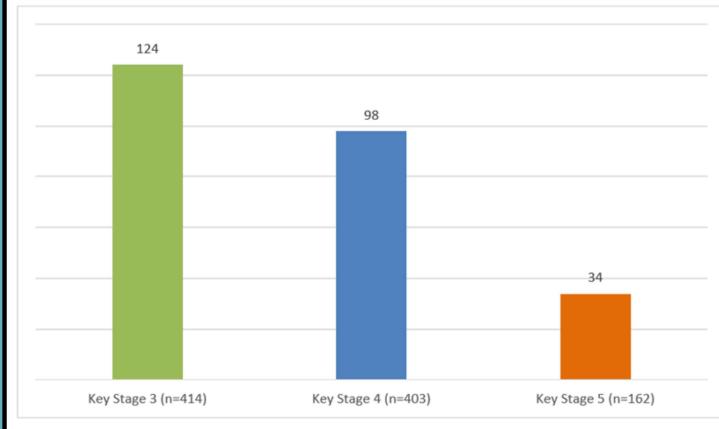


<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/health-50466061>

[https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lanchi/article/PIIS2352-4642\(19\)30323-2/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lanchi/article/PIIS2352-4642(19)30323-2/fulltext)

Schools are teaching less PE

Figure 1: The average number of curriculum PE minutes each week by Key Stage (school level data)



<https://www.youthsporttrust.org/news-insight/research-papers/returning-to-school-after-covid-19>

Schools are shortening play times



(Baines, et al, 2019)



<https://www.ucl.ac.uk/ioe/news/2019/may/break-time-cuts-could-be-harming-childrens-development>



“Exercise is the closest thing we have to a magic bullet for health – physical and mental.”

Dr Ray Fowler



Physical activity reduces teens' depressive symptoms
<https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jamapediatrics/article-abstract/2799811>

Physically active students are less likely than those who do not participate in any kind of physical activity outside of school to skip school, feel like an outsider at school, feel very anxious about schoolwork, or be frequently bullied.
<https://www.oecd.org/pisa/PISA-in-Focus-No-71-Are-students-happy.pdf>



Exercise makes
children smarter



The bottom line is children that take part in more PE, children who play more sports, who exercise more and have higher levels of fitness do better in school.

American Institute of Medicine (2013) – Fitter children show greater attention, have faster cognitive speed and perform better on standardised tests than those who are less active.”

fMRI scans show that fit kids' brains have more activity in them, indicating more neurons were being recruited for a given task.”



Active Lessons



Incorporating basic physical exercise into lessons had “a large, significant effect” on educational outcomes during the lesson, as well as a smaller effect on overall educational outcomes, according to the [study, published](#) in the *British Journal of Sports Medicine*.

<https://www.ucl.ac.uk/news/2019/oct/physical-activity-lessons-improves-students-attainment>



<https://thedailymile.co.uk/>



Active schools



Movement is life

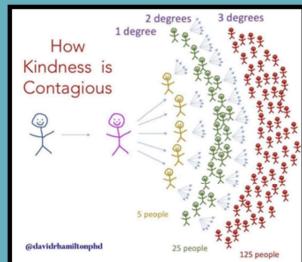


Movement is Life animation <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kYPRV-YnIk>

How can you incorporate more movement
into the school day?



Science of Kindness



Pay it forward



Doing good,
feels good



Doing good,
does us good



Science of Kindness animation <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O9UByLyObjM>

Random Acts of Kindness

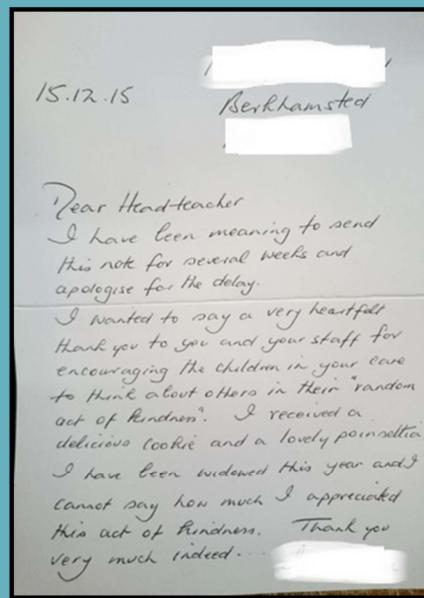


Science of Kindness animation <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O9UByLyObjM>

It's Cool To Be Kind Week



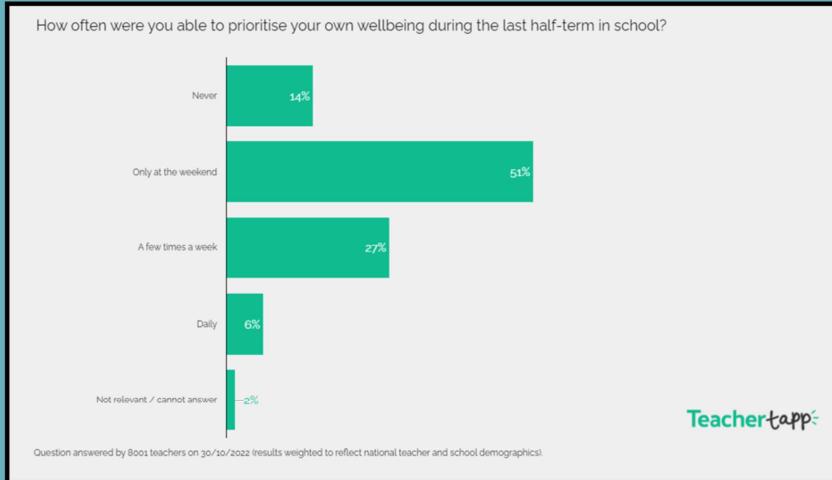
It's Cool To Be Kind Week



How can you encourage more acts of kindness in your school?



We are not great at prioritising wellbeing



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



What are we modelling to children?

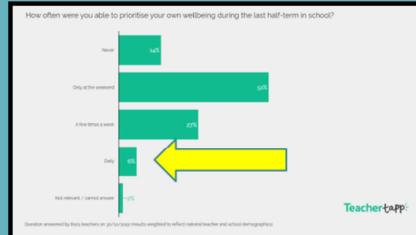


“Children learn more from their caregivers’ unconscious behaviours than any of their conscious manipulations.”

Prof. Alison Gopnik



'Prioritise' wellbeing



-
-
-
-
-
-
-
-

DOING NOTHING AT ALL :)

VS

MAKING SMALL CONSISTENT EFFORTS:

$$(1.00)^{365} = 1.00$$

$$\underline{(1.01)}^{365} = \underline{37.7}$$

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>

Learning to lighten up

“

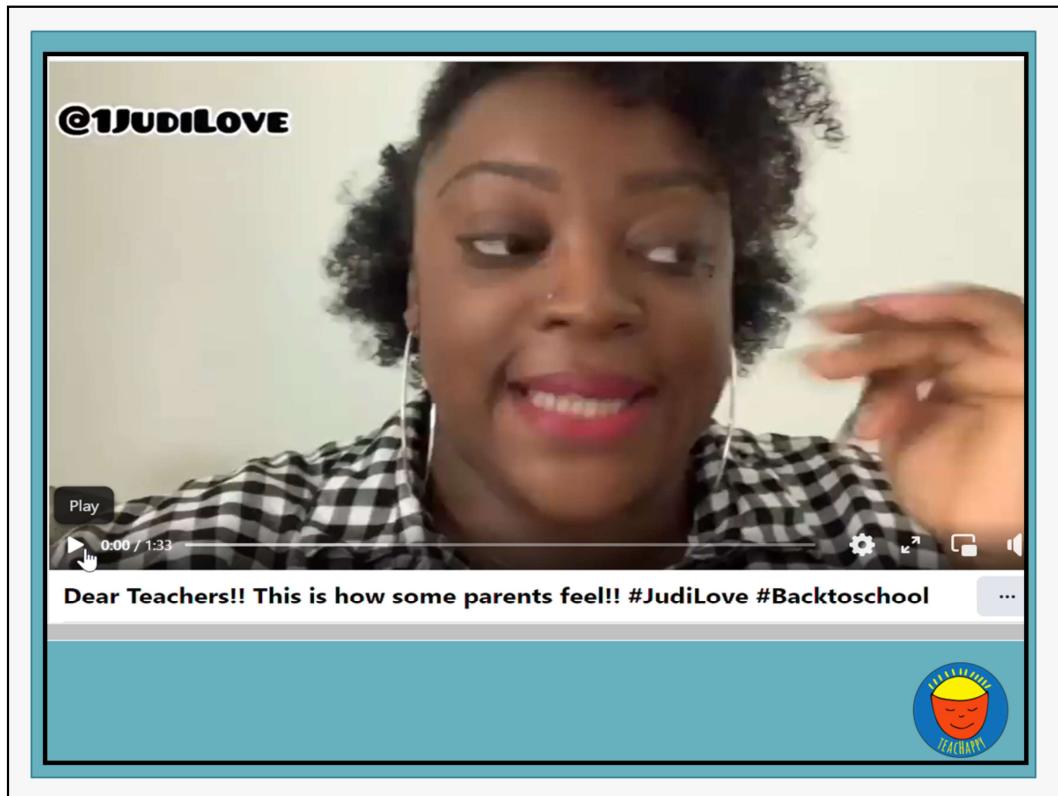
Do everything as if it
were the only thing in
the world that
mattered, while all the
time knowing that it
doesn't matter at all.

PERMA CHODRON

”



When Things Fall Apart – Perma Chodron



How can you look after yourself, do a 'good enough' job and maintain perspective?



Debbie, ECT,
30 years old





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.
- **Stretch Zone** – help get children in that sweet spot of stress and experience flow. Get comfortable with discomfort. Tailor your feedback. Break tasks down and experience success and build from there.
- **Physical activity** – movement is life. Get children sitting down less and moving more.
- **Acts of kindness** – create a culture where kindness is valued and celebrated. Host an It's Cool To Be Kind Week and see what happens.
- **Model wellbeing** – do small things, consistently. Set a positive example. Find opportunities to lighten up.

More from me:



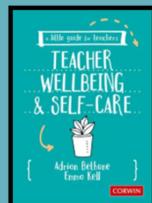
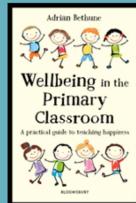
Website: www.teachappy.co.uk

Online courses: <https://courses.teachappy.co.uk/>

Twitter: @AdrianBethune

Instagram: @Teachappyuk

Writing:



Staff Wellbeing and Self-Care in Schools



20%
OFF

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