

***Finding the Balance! How Does Purposefully  
Finding Time to Take Care of Yourself First  
Impact the Ability to Lead and Support Others?***

Crestdale Elementary School

Elizabeth Markward

Principal

[elizabethm@rcs.k12.in.us](mailto:elizabethm@rcs.k12.in.us)

# Background Information

- \* As a wife, mother of 2 wonderfully busy children, and a principal of a growing elementary school, I found that I was struggling with balancing the diverse demands of all of my different roles. I struggled with taking time for me and focusing on my own spiritual, emotional, and physical well-being. I realized that I needed to fill my own cup to be able to fill the cups of others. I was not purposefully finding time to take care of myself first to be able to take care of others.

# Purpose of This Inquiry

- \* Therefore, the purpose of my action research was to focus on spiritual reflection, physical/emotional activities, and purposeful time with my family to balance and fulfill my personal roles; to in-turn, better lead and support others in my professional role.

# My Wondering

- \* With this purpose, I wondered if purposefully focusing on my physical and spiritual wellness first will improve my overall ability to lead and support in both my personal and my professional life.

# My Actions

1. Purposeful spiritual reflection time each day.
  - \* Read the Devotional Jesus Calling
  - \* Spent time reflecting and praying on God's calling for me to be a wife, mom, and principal.
2. Physical exercise 5 times a week.
3. Purposeful family time each weekday night.
  - \* Uninterrupted time to be a mom and a wife.

# Data Collection

- \* The data was collected by keeping a daily log. Reflection and prayer were marked with a (P), exercise (E), and family time (F). I recorded each of these every day for an eight week period.

# My Discoveries

- \* As a result of implementing my action steps and analyzing my data, I found that being purposeful in planning and holding myself accountable with the log had a strong positive impact on my results.
  - \* For my daily readings and prayer time, my log showed that completed this step 56/56 days.
  - \* With exercise, my goal was to exercise 5 days a week. This is equivalent to 40 of the 56 days or 71% of the 8 weeks. I met this goal by exercising 45 out of the 56 days (80%).
  - \* With regards to family time, my goal was each weekday evening which was 35 out of 56 days. I was able to log 30/35 days (86%).

# Where Am I Heading Next

- \* From this action research process, I have restored my belief in finding the balance between my personal and professional life. I have realized that my life will be more balanced if I continue to focus on the essential pieces of spiritual, physical/emotional care, and family.
- \* This also applies to me in my role as an administrator. The administrator role is a very important and demanding job and I love to lead and support my teachers, students and staff. That does not mean I need to give more time, energy and attention and neglect my personal needs.
- \* Going forward, the results and reflections from this process will continue to help me prioritize. I am committed to continuing this process and purposefully working to balance my roles so I can fill my cup and the cup of others.





## ***Finding the Balance! How Does Purposefully Finding Time to Take Care of Yourself First Impact the Ability to Lead and Support Others?***

**Principal Name:** Elizabeth Markward

**School Name:** Crestdale Elementary School

**Principal's Email Contact:** elizabethm@rcs.k12.in.us

### **Background Leading to My Inquiry**

As a wife, mother of 2 wonderfully busy children, and a principal of a growing elementary school, I found that I was struggling with balancing the diverse demands of all of my different roles. I struggled with taking time for me and focusing on my own spiritual, emotional, and physical well-being. I realized that I needed to fill my own cup to be able to fill the cups of others. I was not purposefully finding time to take care of myself first to be able to take care of others.

### **The Purpose of My Inquiry**

Therefore, the purpose of my action research was to focus on spiritual reflection, physical/emotional activities, and purposeful time with my family to balance and fulfill my personal roles; to in-turn, better lead and support others in my professional role.

### **My Wondering**

With this purpose, I wondered if purposefully focusing on my physical and spiritual wellness first will improve my overall ability to lead and support in both my personal and my professional life.

### **My Actions**

To set my wondering into action, I decided upon three action steps to put into place along with a data collection piece for each step. Afterwards, I analyzed my data to reflect on the findings of this action research project. First, I began a purposeful spiritual reflection time each day. I set time aside to read the Devotional [Jesus Calling](#) and spend time reflecting and praying on God's calling for me to be a wife, mom and principal. Second, I purposefully found time in my day for physical exercise 5 times a week. Third, I purposefully made 8:00 the time to spend with my family each weekday night. I focused on putting away my cell phone and computer and focused on being a mom and wife. I collected the data by keeping a daily log. Reflection and prayer were marked with a (P), exercise (E), and family time (F). I recorded each of these every day for an eight week period.

## **My Data**

### **My Discoveries**

As a result of implementing my action steps and analyzing my data, I found that being purposeful in planning and holding myself accountable with the log had a strong positive impact on my results. For my daily readings and prayer time, my log showed that completed this step 56/56 days. With exercise, my goal was to exercise 5 days a week. This is equivalent to 40 of the 56 days or 71% of the 8 weeks. I met this goal by exercising 45 out of the 56 days (80%). Many of the days, I would exercise before work. Knowing that I had closed my exercise ring on my Apple Watch was personally fulfilling for me compared to leaving work at 5:00 pm and knowing I still needed to close my exercise ring. When I exercise, I feel increased energy and positivity about myself. With regards to family time, my goal was each weekday evening which was 35 out of 56 days. I was able to log 30/35 days (86%). My kids would start reminding me when it was 8:00 and that it was family time. Several times, my reading and prayer time would happen as a family. When we ended our day together in prayer, it helped me and my family stay more focused on God and our faith. Since I was not neglecting the important pieces of my personal life, I was able to focus and be more effective and efficient in my role as a principal and supporting others.

### **Where I Am Heading Next**

From this action research process, I have restored my belief in finding the balance between my personal and professional life. I have realized that my life will be more balanced if I continue to focus on the essential pieces of spiritual, physical/emotional care, and family. My faith is essential in my life and I need to consistently and purposefully set aside time to fulfill the need. I also know that being physically active and making sure I am carving out valuable family time without interruptions helps to fill my personal cup. This also applies to me in my role as an administrator. The administrator role is a very important and demanding job and I love to lead and support my teachers, students and staff. That does not mean I need to give more time, energy and attention and neglect my personal needs. Going forward, the results and reflections from this process will continue to help me prioritize. I am committed to continuing this process and purposefully working to balance my roles so I can fill my cup and the cup of others.

### **Bibliography**

N/A