

# In the Rat Race We Call Life, Remember to Find the Joy!

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## **Background That Led to Your Inquiry:**

As a principal of a K-5 building of approximately 600 students, I am a busy person. I do not have an assistant principal and I have found this has been a challenge when it comes to personal well-being. Not to mention, I am the busy dad of 4 children, ranging from 6 months-14 years old. My children do not go to my school district and so with their activities, there is transportation, meals, and running from here to there to keep up with. All of this is a combination for a risk of not being balanced professionally and personally, a combination that is less than ideal in both aspects if I am not conscientious of it.

## **Statement of Your Wondering:**

With this purpose, and through the conscientious effort to improve one's physical and emotional well-being, can the efforts be connected to my overall professional and personal happiness?

## **Methods/Procedures:**

To gain insights into my wonderings, I prioritized three simple activities to allow me to focus on me during the months of January and February. First, I took ½ hour daily of "Me Time"....personal reflection, positive messages, motivational messages, daily reflection/prayer. These were all important to allow me to maximize that 1/2 hour of daily "Me Time", and to allow for flexibility for the type of activity that was most suitable for that day.

In addition, I began to exercise a minimum of 2 hours per week. I know the importance of physical health to one's ability to be a positive leader, but with four children and a building of 600 kids to run by myself, this was one of the first things to go for me. I committed to this in various forms of exercise, again allowing for flexibility in regards to weather, activities I needed to attend, etc.

Third, I committed to a daily journal of top 3 things that happened during the course of the last 24 hours. This also occurred during January and February. I quickly learned to keep the journal by my bedside so it was a visual for me to complete each night before falling asleep. This would allow me to focus on the positive and hopefully lead to better rest by not focusing on the negative as I drifted off to sleep.

I was best able to capture my journey and data by the use of the following: a journal of Top 3 Things from the day and documentation of exercise (Exercise Log).

## **Stating Your Learning and Supporting it with Data:**

As a result of analyzing my data, two important things I learned include the effect others see I see consider my mental and physical well-being as a leader and person in general. Comments were heard such as the following toward the end of this project from a member of my leadership team, "Jeff...you are always Mr. Positive these days. If you have a concern, we must need to fix something!" and from a staff member, "When I found out I

was going to have my third child, I about had a heart attack. After thinking about it, I thought, hey...Jeff has four and if he can do it like he does, I can at least do three!". These statements help me to realize that in all of the craziness of the last six months, I have remained positive and teacher/student focused. I have managed to find the joy that I was hoping to find and maintain, even if I was feeling it inside at all times. I sincerely feel the commitment of the steps in this project allowed for this to happen.

### **Providing Concluding Thoughts:**

Through my conscientious effort to improve my physical and emotional well-being, I was motivated to remind myself of the joys in my life. Did I see the connection to my overall professional and personal happiness? Yes, I definitely did. Using a simple 3-step process, I trained myself to focus on finding the positive in an all-too common world of stress and packing my days as full as possible. I have learned the importance of continuing these practices to maintain my positivism as a leader and to meet the expectations demanded of me in both my professional and personal lives.

### **References:**

N/A