



Self-Care: Building Administrative Capacity

Grant Line Elementary School
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Initial focus was on shared leadership in the building, but after a period of time I changed my mind. I changed buildings three years ago after having great success in a high poverty building. I took over as the principal of a low-poverty school with scores that didn't match the potential. I struggled with delegating responsibility and shared leadership.


Background Info

- Twenty-three years as a public educator
- Fifteenth year as an administrator
- Highlight of my day is working with students and staff
- Difficult couple of years
 - Loss of parent & fur babies
 - Older child started college
 - Moved homes after 9 years
 - Covid!



Loss of fur babies was difficult along with my daughter leaving for college. 2 years with Mom battling terminal cancer before I lost her in November. This was a huge emotional hit. My motivation dropped, by new goal became retirement. I'm a goal oriented person, so this was very contradictory to my personality.

Purpose of This Inquiry



Administrators have the capability of guiding a school, staff, and students to greatness! But what happens when the principal becomes wore down from the day to day challenges including personal life challenges? This project is researching how self care can not only improve the personal life of the principal, but also how taking this time can positively impact the school.

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I finally decided it might be more important to focus on how to be myself again instead of a focus on shared leadership. Although I made the project switch, I still continued to work on building shared leadership in the building.

My Wondering

Will self care improve my leadership?
Is a focus on myself important?



My Actions

- Daily exercise
- Track food intake, focus on increasing healthy options
- Device free time daily
- Spend time with family or new puppy
- Extra care

Data Collection

- . Mood
- . Energy Level
- . Outlook
- . End of project-feedback from those close to me

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Mood

Energy Level-Low, medium, high

Outlook-sad, grouchy, positive, etc

My Data

IPLI Project: Tamara Swarens

Wondering: If self care will improve my leadership.



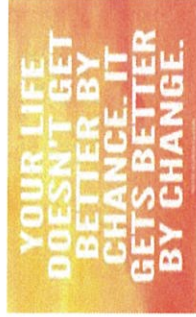
Categories						
Exercise						
Track Food						
Device Free-1 hour						
Time with family or dog						
Extra Care						
Mood						
Energy Level						
Outlook						

Notes:

Exercise (amount of time)
Track Food (stayed in point range)
Extra Care (acupuncture, massage, meditation, yoga)
Energy Level (low, medium, high)
Outlook (sad, grouchy, positive, etc)
Baseline: Weight gain, easily irritated, low energy, frequently frustrated

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Wondering: If self-care will improve my leadership.



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My Data

*Didn't notice a difference immediately, but started to feel a difference after a couple of weeks.

*High focus days: 88% of days were positive and 12% were less than positive

*Low focus days: 50% of days were positive and 50% were less than positive

High Focus Days-Implemented the majority of the self care categories

Low Focus Days-Implemented half or less of the self care categories

Over time, I noticed that even if I had a low focus day, it was still a positive day.

My Feedback

Husband: "You seem a lot happier." Me: "Anything else?" Husband: "No, just happier."

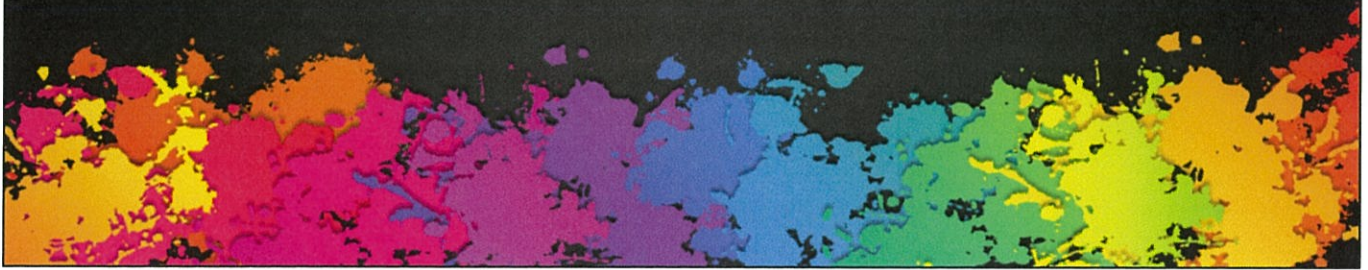
*Daughter: "You seem like yourself again." "You have more energy."

*Daughter's Best Friend: "You're easier to talk to like you used to be." "You're more approachable and I tell you things before I even tell my Mom." "You seem a lot happier and are more energetic."

Originally considered getting feedback from staff, but family sees the true me at the end of the day. So, I decided to get feedback from them instead. Daughter's Best Friend-Known her for 7 years, cheers with my daughter all that time, spend lots of time with her.

My Discoveries

- Self care is important.
- It's ok to make myself a priority.
- It's ok to sometimes struggle, but it's important to know how to pull myself out of the struggle.



Where I am heading next.....

- Continue self care strategies
- Spend time with those I love
- Set new work related goals and actively pursue those goals



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