

Beware of That Little Voice Inside Your Head

As educators we can be our own harshest critic. Whilst that little voice inside our head is often critical, it can also be unrealistic.

"If only I'd done this differently...."

"If only I'd said...."

"Next time I'll...."

*"I **should** have said this...!"*

*"I **should** have done that...!"*

At times we are guilty of "**shou**lding" all over ourselves!

Many of us are guilty of trying to be all things to all people. We are seldom satisfied with a lesson, a meeting or what we achieved on a particular day. We are always on the look out for improving things and making them better.

Happiness is not something ready made. It comes from your own actions.

Our training in education and our work in schools, often focuses on problem solving. As part of the problem solving process we spend time looking for and identifying problems. Diagnosing a problem is the first step towards solving that problem.

We look for problems that individual students, group of students or our whole class are having in their learning. We look for problem behaviours and plan ways to address them. We look at data for evidence of problems and then plan strategies that will solve the problem. We also look at ways of doing things and processes that operate in our school and try to identify ways of improving them.

Dalai Lama

Once we have identified the problem or weakness we then plan how we will address it. The ability to identify and solve problems is one of the key attributes of an effective teacher. 95% of teachers are committed to continuous improvement. Whilst this commitment is admirable, there is a down side. Constantly looking for improvement opportunities can lead to unhealthy levels of stress. We are rarely satisfied and immediately start looking for the next problem to solve or issue to fix.

It is vital that we regularly pause and take the time to reflect on what we have achieved, before we delve into the next phase of identifying and addressing problems. We don't spend enough time celebrating our successes. We tend to quickly brush over our accomplishments and achievements.

We need to monitor that little voice inside our head and what we tell ourselves. At times we can be guilty of thinking, *we aren't good enough, we should be doing more, we need to work harder and longer or that we aren't good enough.*

It is essential that we monitor that little voice inside our head and ensure that our expectations are reasonable and realistic. Working in schools can be demanding. We work with people every day. They can be unpredictable and demanding. We never quite know what is going on in their lives. It is important that we have reasonable expectations of what we can achieve. Wasting energy on perfectionistic thoughts and being hyper critical depletes our reserves of energy and has an impact on our resilience.

Key points

We are often our own harshest critic and are seldom satisfied

Our work in schools often focuses on problem solving

Before moving on to the next problem, appreciate what we have achieved

Monitor that little voice inside our head and what we tell ourself

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