



## POSITIVITY JOURNALS FOR TEACHERS

*"The best and most beautiful things in the world cannot be seen or even touched--they must be felt with the heart."*

— Helen Keller

### OVERVIEW

Teachers record the pleasant feelings they've experienced in a journal each day, helping to cultivate their well-being.

### PLANNING FOR IT

#### WHEN YOU MIGHT USE THIS PRACTICE

- At the beginning of the school year to cultivate a positive school climate
- Any time during the school year, but especially when staff members may be facing a challenging or stressful time
- During a staff training or meeting

#### TIME REQUIRED

- ≤ 15 minutes

#### LEVEL

- Adult

#### MATERIALS

- Journal and writing materials, laptop, or phone

#### LEARNING OBJECTIVE

Teachers will:

- Cultivate their well-being by mindfully focusing on pleasant feelings generated by positive experiences

## SEL COMPETENCIES

- Self-Awareness
- Self-Management

## HOW TO DO IT

### REFLECTION BEFORE THE PRACTICE

If you're leading this exercise with a group of teachers, take a moment to recall any pleasant feelings you've experienced today. What brought about these feelings? How do you feel in this moment recalling them?

### INSTRUCTIONS

#### OVERVIEW

- Keeping a record of your positive experiences will build gratitude and appreciation for how much goodness you have in your life.
- When you take time to notice a student's smile or a parent's goodwill, you will begin to feel that your life is full of blessings.

#### THE PRACTICE

- Keep a journal where you write down the pleasant feelings you've experienced each day.
- Tailor your journal to fit your emotional needs. For instance, if you notice that you're growing a chip on your shoulder at work, you can practice gratitude, and every day you can spend a few minutes reflecting in your journal on reasons you have to be grateful.
- If you're feeling down, you can spend time recalling and writing about joyful times.
- Take a moment to note how you feel before and after writing in your journal. What do you notice?

#### CLOSURE

- If doing this activity as a staff, you might take a moment at the beginning or end of a staff meeting to invite members to share something they wrote.

### REFLECTION AFTER THE PRACTICE

If you introduced this practice to your staff, do you notice a shift in how they relate to each other? To their students? In the school climate overall?

## THE RESEARCH BEHIND THE PRACTICE

### EVIDENCE THAT IT WORKS

A [study](#) of mainly white, female university students found that the experience of positive emotions on a daily basis was related to increased resilience and life satisfaction, and served as a buffer to negative emotions. In addition, the research confirmed that the in-the-moment beneficial effects of positive emotions can help lead to long-term growth.

### WHY DOES IT MATTER?

Teaching is an incredibly stressful job that can lead to high levels of burnout and attrition. More and more, teachers are recognizing that cultivating their own social-emotional skills is critical for their well-being.

Hence, a practice that guides educators to focus on and experience the benefits of positive emotions can help to reinforce teachers' understanding of and commitment to their own well-being, which will ultimately benefit their students and the whole school.

## SOURCE

Adapted from *Mindfulness for Teachers* by Patricia A. Jennings. Copyright © 2015. Published by W. W. Norton. Excerpted by permission of the publisher.