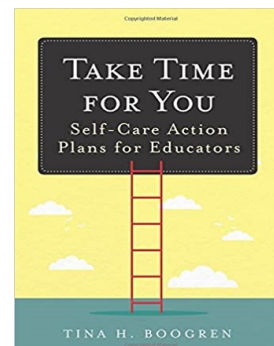


"Self-care is never a selfish act - it is simply good stewardship of the only gift I have, the gift I was put on earth to offer others. Anytime we can listen to our true self and give the care it requires, we do it not only for ourselves, but for the many others whose lives we touch." ---- Parker Palmer



I recently was sent by my district to a two-day self-care conference. Recent surveys reveal the two most stressful jobs of 2020 were nursing and teaching. When I look at the words self-care and fidelity, they typically conjure up negative thoughts for me. I will admit that I headed to the conference a bit cynical. I even went as far as asking if I had to return on day two if day one was not worth my time.

As an instructional coach, I feel I must take care of my teachers, my students, my family and now I need to take care of myself. Shouldn't administration be responsible for our self-care? They are responsible for my happiness at work. They should cancel meetings, take away PD and give me extra planning time. Right? If they do all these things, I will be happy and less stressed! Wrong!! As you might have guessed, I attended day 2 of the conference and if you ever get a chance to attend one of Tina Boogren's workshops, DO IT! Her book, Take Time for You, Self-Care Action Plans for Educators, is a valuable resource and an easy read. <https://www.solutiontree.com/taketime-for-you.html>



Choosing Better!

I really wanted to blame others for my stress and exhaustion because I have no control about what happens at work. As an educator for over 20 years, I have been my own worst enemy, and I didn't even know it until this week. I came away from the workshop with the realization that I am responsible for my own self-care, or as I like to call it, "Lifestyle Tweaks." These are the choices I make about my physical needs, safety needs, belonging needs, and the need to feel valued. No one else can make those choices for me and they don't really cost me anything!

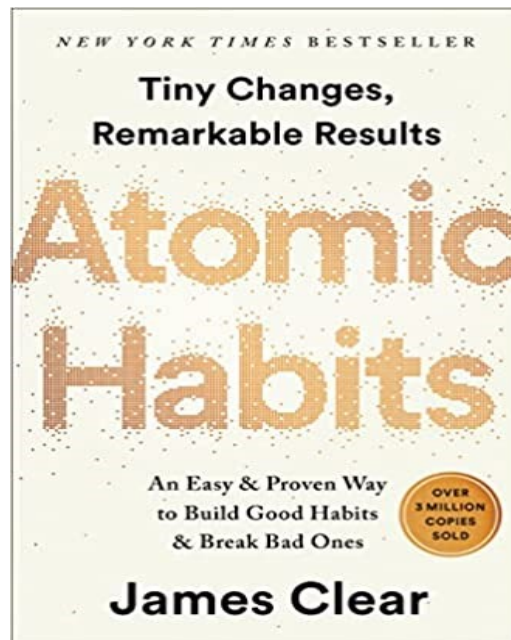
At school, we spend our time invested in making our students successful. However, just like passengers on an airplane, we need to be sure we have put our own oxygen mask on before we are able to assist the people around us.

Bad days will happen...if you are having a bad day, watch the video by Shane Koyczan

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V7OGY1Jxp3o>



Success is the product of daily habits, no matter how large or small. A great book to read for motivation is Atomic Habits, by James Clear. <https://jamesclear.com/books>



Choosing Better, continued

Physiological needs are defined as our basic needs . . . diet, exercise, and sleep. While we may not worry about where our next meal is coming from, nutritional needs are often ignored. We may skip meals and then fill up on empty calories. How can we ensure we meet our dietary needs? The first tip is to eat something for breakfast. Going to school hungry leads to poor food choices, whether it is the donuts in the lounge or snacking on the candy hidden in your desk.

<https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/health-and-families/features/the-science-of-hunger-and-what-makes-us-hangry-a6828111.html>



Another tip is to surround yourself with a team of like-minded teachers. Together, schedule a time out of your classroom to eat lunch. That 20 minutes of pulling away from your responsibilities and nourishing your body is time well spent.



According to Tina Boogren, if you choose to only make one nutritional change, it is to drink plenty of water. Not the water in your coffee or tea, not the water in your adult beverage, but plain, old-fashioned water. Her recommendation is to daily drink an equivalent amount of water that is half your body weight in ounces. Water intake can be tracked on the *Plant Nanny* app.



Choosing Better, continued

As we look at a new year, exercise is on the top of many to-do lists. Instead of focusing on getting an hour of exercise daily, consider smaller, more realistic changes. Make "Movement is Life" your motto. Time walking around the playground with your students can count as movement. A fifteen-minute walk through the neighborhood is more beneficial than deciding you have no time to stretch your muscles and instead spend that time on the couch. For some, finding a support group is beneficial. Whether it be a group of colleagues or an app that provides a 30-day challenge, experiment with what keeps you motivated.

<https://thriveglobal.com/stories/motivational-tips-consistent-exercise-work-out/>

<https://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/fitness/in-depth/fitness/art-20047624>

Oh, my goodness, sleep is essential. How many of us get up each morning grateful that we don't have to struggle with another sleepless night? In her book, Boogren offers some basic tips, such as: removing electronics from your bedroom, avoiding caffeine 6 hours before bedtime, stop eating heavy foods late at night, and engaging in a calming activity, such as meditation, reading, or listening to quiet music. Quiet music is defined as tunes with fewer than 60 beats per minute.

APPS for Better Sleep

10% Happier

Insight Timer

Simply Being

Head Space

Get Grounded

Calm

We are implementing these small changes into our daily lives and look forward to seeing the results. We would love to hear from you as you implement small, positive changes in your self-care.