

## Feeling Our Heart

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Dear Members,

With this month being Heart Health month, our Well Teacher giveaway highlights the importance of tending to our feeling heart as we would work towards optimizing our physical heart health. One of the ways we can do this is through working to understand our feelings and how we can take care of ourselves when those feelings are so very overwhelming.

Let's take a look at some of Brene Brown's words and how we might apply them to the life of a teacher.

*"To form meaningful connections with others, we must first connect with ourselves."* As teachers we make numerous connections during our days, months and school years. These connections can either feed us or be depleting—depending on the circumstances. The importance of connecting with ourselves on a regular basis to tap into our needs is exceedingly important, especially during the last number of years. What does connecting with yourself look like, sound like, feel like? I invite you to take a moment to connect with yourself now, without judgement or comparison to your expectations of where you wish you were or where you thought you might be. Where you are is where you are. How you feel is real, valid and important. What do you need? What is ONE thing you can do for yourself that can help you to feel better in this moment?

*"Choosing to be curious is choosing to be vulnerable because it requires us to surrender to uncertainty. We have to ask questions, admit to not knowing, risk being told that we shouldn't be asking and, sometimes, make discoveries that lead to discomfort."* In this excerpt, it confronts our idea that we have to be all for all and how many of us are hesitant to reach out for support. However, creating a circle of support of critical persons to whom we can turn in times of challenge and difficulty, is an important piece of our professionalism. This includes accessing the programs available to us through our employee assistance and (extended health benefits).

*"Vulnerability is not weakness; it's our greatest measure of courage."* Connecting with ourselves and turning inwards towards our challenges is hard work. It can be overwhelming. As we work to keep well, it's important to keep in mind that wellness is not a destination; it's a state of being that ebbs and flows. Showing ourselves compassion during our challenges and keeping our commitments to ourselves for

our wellness goals can only help to keep our wellness as optimal as possible as often as possible.

A goal for each month: Schedule a check-in with yourself—maybe even a 'date night' with yourself! Whatever it looks like, make time for you and what you need.

If you are curious to read more, *Atlas of the Heart* is available as an audiobook. Listening while in the car, on your run/walk, etc., could be part of checking in.

Finally, I will leave you with this quote, *"I am a mapmaker and a traveler."* Often, we can get caught up in the feeling of a loss of control. However, by connecting with ourselves and creating circles of support, we can create a map for our own wellness and support others who travel with us along our journey.

Bon voyage, colleagues.