

You Matter: A Gentle Guide to Showing Up for Yourself This Summer

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(Based on Mel Robbins' Podcast: *7 Habits... Fixes for a Tired Life.*)

As you get set to close another year in your learning spaces, and close the door on this chapter, a podcast I listened to came to mind for writing this article.

I didn't realize that there were seven habits—my favourite number, and one of the reasons I kept listening.

With full credit to Mel Robbins, who has introduced me to so many other professionals and ideas I incorporate now into my well-being practice, these ideas will help you open the door to your summer chapter while balancing your *teacher-tired*. I am sharing the habits that will resonate for the end of the school year. I encourage you to listen to the full podcast.

Robbins begins this podcast episode discussing automatic pilot and how this can impact our ability to be present, intentional and as thoughtful we can be. These habits are meant to start small and build from there. As always, I encourage you to take what resonates and leave what doesn't.

The first habit she introduces is *Replay the good stuff*. How many times have we found ourselves inside moments we wish could last longer or recall a time that we could go back to? Sometimes we can—in a way. When you're tempted to pick up your phone to "doomscroll" open your photos app instead and set a timer to look through some of your favourite photos. Set up a favourites album if you haven't already done so, and spend some time replaying some of your best memories. This could be a version of your "heavy day" or "good stuff" folder you can retreat to when your thinking and working brain needs a break. This is backed by science, according to Robbins: "Researchers at UCLA found that viewing photos of loved ones activates a sense of social support inside you that decreases your stress level." You can also add a few special photos around your workspace to take a complete screen break. I have always surrounded myself with photos and found it comforting many times.

The second habit is to make a playlist full of good music for dancing and use it when you're washing dishes, sweeping, or other household activities. I used to have a photocopier dance when I was waiting for a job to finish or the copier to reboot. We know the benefits of physical movement and it can be tough to find the time during our busy days. When we turn off automatic pilot and try to make chores fun, we help train our brain to make this activity easier. In long term studies on dancing and its effect on our brains, it was found to combat dementia because it links movement with memory for the steps and for pleasant memories. What songs would be on your playlist?

How do you usually show up in summer? How long does it take you to recover from the school year and enjoy your time away from work? This next habit is all about showing up. Think about a time when someone showed up for you. How did it

make you feel? What if you turned that power of showing up inwards and showed up for yourself? It can be so easy for us to buy a coffee for a friend, send a card for someone's birthday, or invite someone out for a meal. When was the last time you showed up for you—bought yourself a treat or treated yourself to an outing? What would tomorrow look like if you showed up for yourself. Think about a time when you truly felt that you mattered—because you do! What's something you can do for yourself to remind you of that every day?

The final habit I'm sharing is to get outside. Do something other than chores, like taking in a sunrise, sunset or looking at the clouds, hiking to a waterfall or visiting a new beach. The idea is to take time to take it in. Research shows that getting outside and walking barefoot on the ground helps you connect to the physical world and your place within it. Like the "you matter" reminder earlier, the steps you take, the times you show up, the soundtrack you add to your days—all help to make an impact on your world. The impacts that sitting in awe are significant—your mood is lightened, and you can get out of your head. For this "fix", Robbins references *The Breakfast Club* morning radio show by host, Charlemagne the God who speaks about going on an awe walk—taking in the world around you and feeling a release of what you've been holding. Try to recall a moment of awe that you've experienced. How did you feel and what did it look like?

As the school year comes to a close, I encourage you to create a playlist and take an "awe walk" through your memories. Reflect on your favourite moments, the lessons you've learned, and the hopes you're carrying into the future. As you begin to let go of the year behind you, take time to fully embrace the wonder of summer. Build a playlist that captures the energy, rest, and joy you want to experience in the weeks ahead. And consider making a "get-to" list—small, intentional ways you'll show up for yourself. It doesn't need to be long, just meaningful.

Consider sharing this article, and/or the podcast with colleagues, friends, and family members to help their summer chapter be one of intention and mattering.

Your Professional Learning and MAP team wishes you a restful, relaxing and rejuvenating summer.

