

The Importance of Remembering

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As we leave a month of remembering in which we are asked to remember and hold the sacrifices of others in our hearts, comes this month's wellness reminder about remembering our why.

Sometimes we ask ourselves this question in moments of frustration or desperation of why we got into this profession in the first place; wondering if we are making a difference at all, wondering if the effort we are putting in is really allowing our students to show up as the best versions of themselves...

What if I said that if your heart is in it, then you are already so much further ahead than you think you are!

What if you acknowledged where you are today without sitting in judgement but seeing it as an opportunity to learn and grow?

What if you reached out to a colleague or a group of colleagues to help you close any gap that exists between your expectations and your reality?

What if you adjusted your expectations so that you move towards accepting that your best is a moving target and will (and should) change as the circumstances around you change? Also, what if you recognized that your best is not, and was never meant to be, perfect? You are one member of a team for the students in front of you, and whom you support. You are not the only member and you are not meant to be. So, how can you lean on the other members of the team when needed? Who do you need in your circle who is not already there?

For the next few moments, try to sit quietly and connect with the moment where you decided that teaching just might be the career for you. Try to remember

what was happening around you in that moment. Where were you? Who was with you? Did someone inspire you? If they did, speak their name to yourself or out loud, whatever you are comfortable doing. What did they do and/or say that inspired you? Call these words/actions and ideas forward. Sit here. Be here for another moment longer. What is this feeling? Is there more than one? Try to sit with the comfortable feeling and allow any discomfort to sit on the sidelines. Take that deep breath in along with that inspiration and try to breathe out the discomfort and doubt. You are making



a difference. You may not necessarily see or hear the results, but you are. Be hopeful in that.

Now, after having spent this time in reflection, try to make the connection between your inspiration and where you are at this point in your career. Outside of the factors over which you have no control—global pandemic, increasing expectations, data collection, seemingly endless documentation—all of those things that try to take away from your time to

truly connect with your students, what is left over? Are there pockets of time and opportunity to grasp into those elements that are within your control? Try this. Draw a circle on a piece of paper. Begin to write down the elements of your learning space over which you have more control. We are not seeking quantity here. Instead, we will look for ways to make these pieces 'quality' time for you and your students. Now, outside of the circle, take note of the top three things that seem to take away from your time to connect with the students. After you have noted these, try not to stay with these. Return to the inner circle. Think about ways that you can make the most out of the time you have to show up and be as authentic as possible with your students. This shift will not happen all at once and there may be some times where it doesn't go well. Remember—our best is sometimes a moving target and that is ok!

We will check in again next month to see how things are going and how much time you are able to spend in your inner circle. Remember—you don't have to do it all by yourself. There is a team to help! When you start to doubt yourself, try to reconnect to those words/actions/people that inspired you to become a teacher in the first place; draw on positive feedback you may have received to help you to switch your mindset so that it is more helpful and comfortable.

You can make a difference. You are making a difference. When you're not sure of where to go next, do the next right thing while you reach out within your circle to help you.

I encourage you to reach out to me if you'd like: amarchand@staff.nstu.ca