

## Mission: Possible

We can start to define our cement shoes by creating our own personal mission statement. Successful businesses and organizations do this to clarify their purpose, so why can't individuals do the same? When we get a clear understanding of what our mission is, it becomes easier for us to stay true to it. Our mission statement clarifies our core values, our unifying purpose—our true north. When we stay grounded in our truth, we not only serve as a role model for those students who are just setting out to define themselves but also will be less likely to

compromise our integrity. We will behave and interact in ways that make us feel proud, not remorseful.

In my practice, I use this exercise to support professionals who have become lost because of burnout or trauma history, but it can be monumentally helpful to all of us. It rededicates us to our work, reaffirms our inner selves, and helps us define our own trigger points and areas of contention. Further, it gives us something tangible to hold on to and reflect on during those times when we are feeling most compromised and vulnerable.

Take a moment and think about how you would like to be seen and interpreted. Here's another way to look at it: if your students were to give you a tribute speech, what would you want it to include? How would you like them to describe you? There is no single answer here; each of us must figure out our own "fit." Being true to ourselves means accepting ourselves for who we are, not who others wish we could be (or how we imagine others would like us to be). Acting in ways that align with our knowledge of ourselves will ensure a more cohesive and consistent response in all arenas of our job—with students, families, and fellow staff and in stressful and not-so-stressful situations—an essential ingredient for trauma-sensitive practice. Attempting to act in a manner that is not true to ourselves, on the other hand, sets the stage for mistrust and disruption.

## Your Turn

I have seen firsthand how transformational the process of developing a personal mission statement is. Now it's time to create your own. The following questions provide a good jumping-off point. Typically, as you complete the exercise, one or two key themes emerge as the foundation of who you are and how you want to be. What do you think your overarching theme or message would be? The results may reaffirm what you already believe about yourself or surprise you with what they reveal.

2. At the conclusion of the 28 days, record your responses to these questions: how consistently did you engage in the four focus areas of the self-care challenge? How do you feel? Are these activities worth continuing? If so, make a 70-day, 365-day, and 10,000-day commitment to continuing. Let me know how it goes!

Reading  
#2

Fostering  
Resilient  
Learners



- What do you love?
- Why did you choose this profession?
- Why do you continue to go to work every day?
- Whom do you seek out as a partner in your career/life?
- What is your inspiration behind teaching?
- Where do you lead others?
- What would you like to accomplish in your career/life?
- What do you believe about students?
- What are three core values that are important to you?
- What three words would you like others to use to describe you at your retirement dinner?