

Our Path to First Choice No.17
2018/19

Everyone,

It is a busy and stressful time of the year. Let's take some time to make sure that we don't exert more stress and worry than really needed. This time of the year should be a lot more enjoyable than we make it.

Our Path Topic

We've spent a good deal of time on good organizational and planning tools. Let's take a week and just remind ourselves how to relax and enjoy life a little more.

The American Psychological Association (APA) recommends seven tips for dealing with the holiday stress. Here they are:

- **Calm down.** Soon after you awake, close your eyes, take several deep breaths and [meditate](#) or just relax. Throughout the day when feeling stressed, take a minute to relax, take a big breath and calm down.
- **Put on rose-colored glasses.** When people try to push their bad habits on you during this holiday season, tune into their motivations. For instance, before you get annoyed at Aunt Jane, who keeps urging you to try a piece of her apple pie, or your co-worker Frank, who keeps trying to fill your glass with an adult beverage, first take a deep breath. Then, step into their shoes and realize that Jane is just showing that she loves you, and Frank is merely trying to be convivial. Then graciously thank them for their misguided [attention](#). Rather than view your situation with annoyance, be [grateful](#) instead.
- **Get moving.** Perhaps one of the best ways to overcome stress during the holidays or any other time is to exercise regularly. Research shows that physical activity not only boosts your fitness and energy levels but can also elevate your moods. In addition, exercise has been found to reduce [anger](#), tension, fatigue and confusion. Despite the many demands on your time, this is not the season to stop exercising. Indeed, when regular exercisers are inactive, they begin to feel depressed and fatigued after just one week, according to a study from scientists at the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences in Bethesda, Maryland. Exercise also can give you that much-acclaimed "runner's high." Indeed, research shows that rigorous physical activity of any kind pumps up production of endorphins, your body's feel-good neurotransmitters.
- **Go for real foods mostly.** Inevitably, at this time of year, you'll be tempted with sugary, empty-calorie "treats" just about wherever you go. But to be your most energetic, focused and happy self, it's best to eat foods that grow on trees or on the ground (vegetables and fruits) and to choose healthy fats (such as olive oil and flax seeds), lean protein (such as fish and organic chicken) and legumes, nuts and seeds.
- **Take polite portions of "comfort" foods and drinks.** During the holidays, it's easy to "fall off the wagon" and use—or over-use—alcohol, sugar and caffeine. It's best to think before you treat your body like a trash can instead of a temple. The best way to stay true to the best you is to limit your consumption of such comfort or pleasure foods and drinks as apple pie, cookies, pasta and eggnog. When offered these and other "goodies," try to take three to five "polite" bites and sips—and only after having a well-balanced meal with smart carbs (vegetables, fruits or whole grains), fats and protein. (See Tip #4.) Be aware that if you're a sugar addict, you must be especially vigilant when it comes to desserts and quickie carbs.

- **Prepare “Nice To Do For Me” and “Need to Do For You” lists.** Writing down all that you have to do during the holidays will help you realize how do-able your tasks are. Be realistic as to what you put on your lists. Then start tackling one item from each list in turn. For example, after buying gifts for your mom or significant other, take time to work out, too. By alternating between lists, you won’t feel deprived, because you’re being good to yourself. Better yet, as Cheryl Richardson suggests in her fabulous book, [Take Time for Your Life: A 7-Step Program for Creating the Life you Want](#), prepare an “Absolute Yes” list, which will reflect priorities that inspire you to use your gift of time well. “When you practice extreme self-care and put yourself first, you are then fully available to others without resentment or anger,” she aptly points out.
- **Be generous.** One of the best ways to stay calm, content and cheerful this time of year is to act generously with your loved ones, co-workers and [friends](#). This doesn’t have to mean you’re spending a lot of money. You can be generous with your compliments. You can generously offer to do a loved one’s dreaded errand. You can generously write a fun, short poem. When you are creative with your gifts and thank you’s, people will appreciate your real, heartfelt sentiments.

So, try to take the holiday stress in stride, and find ways to relax and enjoy the people around you. Life’s too short to stress about stress!

Board Information and Policy Updates

- Attached are: **None**
- The Policy Committee’s next meeting will be January 7th. They are looking at a few policies. Here they are:
 - **No. 824—Adult/Student Boundaries.** The intent of this policy is to protect both the student and the staff member from any question of inappropriate behavior. However, it can be viewed as having little flexibility for the human connection and/or teacher/student important trust connection. The committee has gotten feedback from WAEA and the Teacher Advisory. They are moving slow on this policy. Although it is a very good policy to have in place, it really needs time to understand the ramifications. The committee has been studying this policy since last spring.
 - **No. 215—Promotion and Retention.** The committee has not finalized this policy. However, it wants to give teachers more input in the decision. They wish to have more of a committee decision.
 - **No. 130—Homework.** The committee is reviewing the homework policy in order to recommend a more consistent approach for across the district. They will be reviewing other school districts’ policies to better understand what others’ expectations may be.

Piece of the Puzzle

This week’s Piece of the Puzzle is Dianne Eberhardt. Dianne is a fearless leader that deserves recognition. Even in the most challenging of situations, she encourages those around her. She is supportive to her staff, and is always available to listen to one’s concern. She goes above and beyond to help those in their professional and personal lives. Dianne is an amazing administrator. She can make decisions on a whim and is truly talented at making everyone—parent, teacher, and/or student feel cared for in any given situation. When parents have concerns and become challenging, she has a talent for diffusing situations and bringing them around to be part of our Fairview team. Dianne is a true lifter upper to all who encounter her. Congratulations, Dianne!!

*Review for You

Why is the selection and use of performance measures or indicators so important to performance improvement?

Events

- December 13th—Mowrey Holiday Concert
- December 13th—Summitview Holiday Concert 7PM at WAMS
- December 18th—Middle School Holiday Concert 7PM at WASHS

*Review Answer (Important to Know)

The measures or indicators we select should best represent the factors that lead to improved student learning outcomes, other customer operational, budgetary, financial, and societal performance. A comprehensive yet carefully culled set of measures or indicators tied to student/other customer and organizational performance requirements provides a clear basis for aligning all processes with our organization's goals. We must measure in order to manage by fact.

We must measure our target of 95% of our students getting their *First Choice*. The question is how will we measure that goal? Although people are working on that question, our processes and systems must align with the goal in order to achieve it.

Important Safety Tips from Governor Wolf

Attached

Final Thoughts

- *Your calm mind is the ultimate weapon against your challenges. So relax.*—Bryant McGill
- *You have enough. You do enough. You are enough. Relax.*—Anonymous
- *Your mind will answer most questions if you learn to relax and wait for the answer.*—William S. Burroughs
- *You can discover more about a person in an hour of play than in a year of conversation.*—Plato
- *The time to relax is when you don't have time for it.*—Sydney J. Harris
- *Sometimes the most productive thing you can do is relax.*—Mark Black
- *People are focusing on what really matters-financial security, relaxing time with family and friends, and reduced stress during the holiday season.*—Betsy Taylor
- *Peace is the result of retraining your mind to process life as it is rather than as you think it should be.*—Dr. Wayne W. Dyer

Enjoy the rest of your week!

Tod