



Teachers, Do You Have a Plan to Avoid Burnout for the Upcoming School Year?

By Educator Barnes – July 14, 2019

We have all been there. You went away for vacation, relaxed, and had a good time. Then, you return to your normal day-to-day routine, and you feel like you need another vacation. A recent article stated, “Two-thirds of respondents to a 2018 American Psychological Association survey said that their post-vacation positive vibes dissipated within a few days.”

Many people outside of the teaching profession are surprised that some teachers feel this way. *Don't they have the summer off and all those breaks?* Each year, I've seen it. Teachers return for the first week of school, and shortly afterward, they are as frazzled as they were when they left for summer break at the end of the school year. This is a sign that these teachers could be on the road to burnout. I believe a huge cause of teacher burnout is teachers not having a plan for when they return from a break.

Here are some considerations to avoid burnout once summer break ends:

1. Arriving early/staying late

Think about how many days a week you will stay late or arrive early. Yes, there are times when situations happen and you unexpectedly have to stay after school. This should not happen every day. On my calendar, I mark days when I plan to stay late or arrive early. This small action helps me not stay late by default. This also means having a plan to leave on time. Shut your computer off when you walk students to the buses. Have your bags packed. You will not leave if you don't have your stuff together.

2. Activities

During the summer, I am able to pick up a few more leisure activities. Why do these activities have to end when school begins? You might not be able to do them all, but pick one or two to continue. I have been spending time writing a middle grades fiction novel. This might not sound like leisure to you, but I used to write fiction all the time as a little girl. This year is the first year I've gotten back to it. I plan to carve out time to continue working on my novel to have an outlet outside of school.

3. Family and friends

Make dates with your family and friends. The summertime should not be the only time your children, spouse, or friends get real quality time with you. They should not be an afterthought but a forefront consideration. I already have date nights scheduled with my husband, family nights scheduled with my sons, and even time penciled in for my parents.

4. Treatment

Therapy, meditation, prayer, etc. are all good ways to maintain balance and focus. I have written and talked at conferences about my personal benefits from therapy. I'm still struggling with mediating; I always get distracted. Whatever works for you, do it. I listened to teachers during the annual Teacher Self-Care Conference talk about ending up in the emergency room because they weren't taking care of their mental health. Don't let this be you.

5. Say no

No. Repeat this word. Seriously. Don't get roped into so many additional school activities and responsibilities that you don't have a life outside of school. You are still a good educator even if you aren't involved in every committee or activity. Pick one or two and do those well. Also, when you say no, be prepared to be asked again. Then, say no again.

The school year shouldn't begin and you are already wondering how many days are left until the first school break. To avoid this fate, take time and make a plan.