

Five Gems of Knowledge I Learned at the Annual Teacher Self-Care Conference



Educator Barnes – 6/27/19

The third annual [Teacher Self-Care Conference](#) was held in Atlanta on Friday, June 21-Saturday, June 22. Educators from across the United States and Canada were present. Although I was one of the presenters at the conference, I learned much from other presenters and educators in attendance. Below, I have included five gems I learned during my time at the conference.

Ignoring self-care is dangerous.

Too many educators at the self-care conference shared the dangers of not taking care of themselves. I heard stories of teachers who had breakdowns, landed in the emergency room (some on multiple occasions), and were on anxiety or depression medication due to the stressors of being an educator. Some teachers were on the verge of death because they were neglecting themselves and putting everyone and everything

before self. This is not the answer. The foundation of this conference was self-care has to be non-negotiable.

Your authenticity is important and a form of self-care.

Keynote speaker Chris Emdin stated, “Your authenticity is your vibranium.” Vibranium is a reference from Black Panther. Essentially, being you is important and when you try to change yourself for others or the school system, you are harming yourself; this is not self-care.

Educators need a community of support.

I have presented at the last two annual Teacher Self-Care Conferences and at a mini one-day Teacher Self-Care Conference. At each conference, I have added new teachers to my community of teacher friends. For The Educator’s Room, I wrote an article called, [“If You Want to Survive, Find Your Teacher Tribe.”](#) I still believe this is important. We all need people who understand our plight, whom we can confide in and feel safe. This conference was a great place to find educators to add to your teacher tribe.

Administrators need self-care too.

I’m not going to lie. Sometimes when I sitting on the church pew listening to the pastor preach, I think about how I wish a certain person was in attendance to hear what the pastor is saying. This was exactly what many educators expressed about their administration. Furthermore, if administrators took care of themselves, they would be less stressed and possibly change the way they lead. I could count on one hand how many administrators were present. Luckily, at next year’s conference, there will be a day for administrators.

Educators must learn to say no.

As an educator, you sometimes believe you cannot say no. On August 5, my husband and I will be married for 13 years. We might not have made it to that milestone if I didn’t learn to say no. Early in my marriage, I was living at the school and only going home, to shower, change clothes, eat, and sleep. Some days I was at school from 7 AM-7 PM. That’s not a life. I could remember my husband saying, “You are always at that school.

Come home.” Yes, we do put in extra hours outside of the school day, but this cannot be an everyday situation. Honestly, there is always going to be work to do. You have to prioritize what to do and then go live your life.

If you have not been to this conference, make sure you attend. The next annual conference in [Atlanta will be June 25-27, 2020!](#)

In addition to our annual event, the Teacher Self-Care Conference will have mini one-day events in Philadelphia (October 19, 2019), Houston (January 25, 2020), St. Louis (April 4, 2020) and our Annual three-day event back in Atlanta on June 25-27, 2020.