

[Recording starts 0:00:00]

Today's show sponsor is Bloomz, my favorite tool for engaging parents in the classroom. Bloomz is sponsoring my April webinar, **The Five Habits You Can Start Now to Help Your Classroom Thrive in The Fall**. <http://cctea.ch/bloomz-spring> At the end of the show I'll tell you how you can sign up.

Joan Flaherty:

"If you're like me you're getting old every year but your students are actually staying the same age."

Vicki Davis:

The Ten-minute Teacher podcast with Vicki Davis. Every week day you'll learn powerful practical ways to be a more remarkable teacher today.

VICKI: Today, teachers, we want to think about the occupational hazard of emotional fatigue. And we have Joan Flaherty with us today. And I have to say, Joan, as we discuss before when I started taping the show here, your opening is so moving and it really spoke to me. Tell us a little but about your quote, give us your quote and why this spoke to you as a teacher.

JOAN: Well, thank you so much, Vicki. I'm touched by that comment. You're referring to the opening of my article *An approach to rejuvenating our teaching -- and ourselves*. https://www.kpu.ca/sites/default/files/TransformativeDialogues/TD.7.1.5_Flaherty_Rejuvenating_our_teaching.pdf The quotation which resonates, I think, not just with me but I think it just resonates universally is from Mary Oliver, the poet, it's from the poem *Wild Geese*. And the very last line of that poem is, "Tell me. What is it you plan to do with your one wild and precious life?"

(Editor's Note: Upon researching for links, this quote is actually from Summer's Day by Mary Oliver which can be found here - <https://www.loc.gov/poetry/180/133.html>. She does have a poem, Wild Geese, which can be found here: http://www.phys.unm.edu/~tw/fas/yits/archive/oliver_wildgeese.html Personally, I don't agree with the theology of either poem, however I am including them as reference for the listeners.)

And it was kind of interesting because I came across that quotation at a teaching professor conference in the States and the keynote speaker, Tom Brown, (*Unable to determine which Tom Brown this is.*) who quoted the line was actually talking about students. And he said that had posted that with a quotation on his office door and it was for students to see and to ponder.

[00:02:00]

But I thought to myself, “Oh, my goodness, it applies not just to my students but it applies to me as well.” And it kind of changes everything when you start looking at the big picture in that way. It’s not just about looking at teaching but it’s looking at my life.

VICKI: That’s right.

JOAN: And I think a lot of your listeners could relate. They don’t see teaching as a separate part – I think we don’t see teaching as a separate part of our life, we see it as just an intrinsic part of our entire life. So that’s why it resonated.

VICKI: And I’m sitting here, Joan, and after teaching very hard all day, exhausted, now recording a podcast and then I’ve got a meeting tonight for a big global project that I’m working on with some other teachers and sometimes I wonder if I’m too tired to do all that I want to do with my life. So how are you going to help me and everybody listening with our emotional fatigue because it’s a very real problem? I mean, honestly, I could probably go to sleep right now and wake up tomorrow.

JOAN: It’s a big question for all of us because teaching is a burnout profession, it’s a cliché. But it’s a cliché because there’s truth in it. Here’s what I’d like myself to consider and then all of these things I say for myself just as much as everyone that is that our minds are incredibly powerful. And if we can just reframe what it is that we’re doing from this is my job and it’s very tiring and I don’t think I can take anymore and I’m frustrated with the students and it doesn’t feel gratifying anymore. If we can, perhaps, take that and reframe into “what am I getting out of this?” Because so often as teachers were asked to focus so much on addressing out student’s needs, addressing other people’s needs and probably we’ve got into teaching because that’s what we feel called to do.

[00:04:00]

We feel called to help other people, help our students. And I’m just going to suggest, try reframing that, try taking a step back and thinking, “Oh, I am not going to put my students at the center, instead, I’m going to put myself at the center.” And I’m suggesting that if we try thinking at it from that angle, we can possibly help not just ourselves but also out students.

VICKI: What do you mean by putting ourselves at the center because I like to have a student-centered classroom. But are you really more talking, because you talk a lot in your article about sharing power with students? I mean, you’re really about empowering students but when we put ourselves at the center, is that emotionally? How are you phrasing that?

JOAN: Okay. Let me just explain. The two go hand-in-hand. I’m going to suggest that when we help ourselves we’re helping out students. So when we pay attention to our emotional health we are, in fact, elevating our students – helping to lift our students.

I'll give you an example; just stop and think for a moment of why it was that you got into teaching. I'm going to suggest that we probably all got into teaching because we ourselves like being in the classroom. I don't know of any teacher who didn't enjoy being in the classroom. Most of us did when we were younger. So what does that say about us? It says that in our heart – and I think it's really important that we pay attention to our hearts desire here.

In our hearts, I'm going to suggest that we are first and foremost not teachers but I'll bet that first and foremost we are learners. So if we can stop and think, when I'm in the classroom, how can I satisfy my heart's desire to be a learner? And I think there are all kinds of ways because we've got a whole classroom full of students who can teach us all kinds if we would just take the time to stop and listen we would be aware of.

They can teach us how to be patient, they can teach us about their different backgrounds. If you're like me you probably got a classroom full of international students, students from all kinds of different backgrounds. And if we stop and listen we're going to hear their different perspective on things, viewpoints that we hadn't considered before.

[00:06:00]

If you're like me, you're getting older every year but your students are actually staying the same age. You can learn a lot about technology, you can learn a lot about the newest trends, you can just learn a lot about what young people's interest and energies, the areas they're led to.

So when we satisfy that need of our own to be a learner, when we say, "you know what, I'm going to walk into this classroom and I'm just going to focus on learning, what I can learn for myself." And that actually doesn't even just have to be walking into a classroom and what I can learn from the classroom, it could also be grading papers. When I grade papers I learn a lot in terms of the different perspectives that student bring. When we focus on that, in my mind if I say I'm going to put myself first, I'm going to focus all the stuff that I can learn from these students.

When we do that, we morph quite naturally into building a learner-centered classroom. Because we start showing our students respect saying to them, "Ah, you're more than a student, you're a teacher to me." And for me, that changes everything.

VICKI: You know, I have these questions I ask myself every day when I journal and one of them is "what did I do yesterday and the other is, what did I learn yesterday. (Adapted from the 7 questions I ask myself every day - <http://www.coolcatteacher.com/the-7-questions-i-ask-myself-every-day/>) And I really try to look at my mistakes – and I got this from John Maxwell, (See [The Most Important Person to Ask Questions](#) by John Maxwell) I can't take credit for it.

When I reframe my mistakes and say okay, this happened in my classroom yesterday but I learned [blank], then in some ways, by reflecting, I'm teaching myself.

JOAN: Yes, there you go. You're teaching yourself. You're teaching yourself and I'm going to suggest you're also honoring your heart's desire to be a learner. I think the teachers are in their hearts, learners.

VICKI: What advice do you have for teachers who feel like, "You know what, I don't know if I can make it another day." They've got so far, they're worn out and they're just not sure what they're going to do about it. What's your advice there?

[00:08:00]

JOAN: It will sound very counter-intuitive, Vicki. I'm going to say, put yourself at the center, go into the classroom and ask yourself, "What can the students give me? What do I derive from these students? What benefits am I collecting by being in the classroom and by engaging with these students?" And if we can start focusing on that, I do believe it turns things around, I do believe it will help us find our precious life and lead it in the best possible way.

VICKI: So teachers, there's so many things but this actually fits with some research that I had read. I do like to journal and I had come across some research that I'll put in the show notes that people who write down the five things they're grateful for everyday actually become happier after several months than someone who won the lottery. (See <http://www.coolcatteacher.com/9-fine-reasons-to-keep-a-journal-and-how-to-help-kids-do-it-too/> and <http://happierhuman.com/benefits-of-gratitude/>) And when I tell my students this I always say, "I would love to test that theory." But I think it is true what Joan is saying of being grateful and looking at what are the things we receive out of the classroom? Because I know for me when I start thinking about how much I give I kind of feel diminished, but when I start thinking about how much I get from them, it expands my joy for teaching.

JOAN: That is exactly it. That is exactly it. So nicely put.

VICKI: On Thursday April 27th at 6pm Eastern, I'll be sharing five habits you can start now to help your classroom thrive in the fall. That is April's free webinar. There are things you can do now to have a better classroom in the fall and no, it won't wear you out, it will actually rejuvenate and get you excited. So join me by going to cctea.ch/bloomz-spring to register for the webinar. Or just go to the show notes are coolcatteacher.com/podcast for the link.

Thank you for listening to the Ten-minute Teacher Podcast. You can download the show notes and see the archive at coolcatteacher.com/podcast. Never stop learning.

[End of Audio 0:09:13]

[Transcription created by tranzify.com. Some additional editing has been done to add grammatical, spelling, and punctuation errors. Every attempt has been made to correct spelling. For permissions, please email lisa@coolcatteacher.com]

