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Today on episode 71 we talk to Mark Eichenlaub about how to energize your soul for great teaching. It's Motivation Monday. This is episode 70.

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: Happy Monday teachers. Today we have 7th grade reading teacher from Chicago Mark Eichenlaub. @[MarkWEichenlaub](#)
Did I say that correctly, Mark? I'm not sure.

MARK: You did, Vicki. Thanks for having me.

VICKI: Good. Awesome. And he's author of prosperous teachers <http://www.prosperousteachers.com> and really has a motivational message for all of us. So, Mark, what do you do to get back up when you're just exhausted and it's the end of the year like a lot of us are right now?

MARK: Well, I found a lot of things over the year. I've had my up and downs. I found some things that, kind of going back through, looking through some things as a teacher that has worked for me and has not worked for me so well. I've kind of little-down to a list of five or six things that's helped me a ton as a teacher. And I do have hypothyroidism so I don't know if your listeners are familiar with that. But that can really drain your energy. So that's kind of something I've always battled with and my energy levels have been inconsistent in the past. However, these things have helped me a ton.

And I do think some that's a normal healthy person would benefit even more than me.

VICKI: So what are these things? Tell us, Mark?

MARK: Well, when I really sat down and thought about, "what am doing this for, why am I a teacher" and putting it in writing. And everyone is like, "that's stupid, I don't want to sit down and do it." But really having it in writing I do think does something inside your head. It does change you.

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And so I did sit down and know every single day why I'm here and what I'm doing and it energizes me. It gives me a ton of energy and it also helps me know, okay, this is wasting my time, this is a waste of time, I'm getting distracted. I don't need to be looking at news or sports scores. There's an unlimited number of things that pull us off track. Looking back, I spent years of the crisis reaction, crisis reaction, crisis reaction, over and over and over. And when I sat down and I really put it in writing it helped me, like, holy cow, wow, I'm here to help kids love to read and

write and those are gifts and tools that they can use to do anything in the world. And so it excites me a lot to come in everyday and have that opportunity.

Another thing is really taking the time to really love your students, unconditionally love your students. We've all been kids, we've all made mistakes. Be patient with them. Just understand that they're going to make mistakes and it's okay to love them no matter what. And I'm sure people that know me might go, "Oh, I can't believe you said that." You can't think like that. Well, kids know. Kids pick off body language, it's not just what you say. But when your body language and all your non-verbals are telling them that you care about them they know.

VICKI: And you know. I've written down my objective and my life purpose is to help teachers and students do remarkable things with great love. And technology is part of a lot of remarkable things. So that kind of fits with who I am. But I think love is a four letter word that belongs in the classroom, I totally agree.

MARK: Yeah. And what you do with your side is fantastic. Again, I got to thank you. You really help inspire a lot of us out here.

VICKI: So what else do you do to stay motivated?

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MARK: Because of my health issue I had to really look at my diet and exercise. And those have been huge. I'm not sure how familiar your listeners are with the paleo diet. But essentially I eat a lot of vegetables and nuts and lean meat and stuff like that. And it may not work for everyone but I'm pretty sure that if you sit down at lunch time and you eat a big bowl of pasta or you're eating fries and a burger you're not going to feel your best the second half of the day and you're not going to be as good of a teacher as you would like to be. Your mood is going to suffer, your energy levels are going to suffer. And that's something you can control.

VICKI: And I agree with you. I've just got to remember that when I see those burgers and fries. It's like, oh my goodness, I know I'm going to pay the price after lunch when I teach keyboarding, I know I'm not going to feel good but I do that anyway. So that's such a great reminder. What else?

MARK: It's tough. Really, the times I'm more successful with it is I got to pack it at night. I got to pack my cut up green peppers and carrots and apples and nuts and my salad the night before or else it's not going to happen. Times I've been more successful with bringing healthy food to work. I've really got to do it the night before cutting up the vegetables, making the salad, packing my healthy snacks, apples, bananas, all that kind of stuff. Because I know if I wait till the morning it's just too chaotic.

And I got a two-year-old son and anything can happen in the morning and I could show up and wind up having to eat a hot lunch here and you know how that goes.

VICKI: Yeah, I do. Unfortunately, I got to do the discipline. I guess I need to stop recording so any podcasts. But, you know, I have a question for you. Mark, as I listen to you, you seem very confident right now. Have you always been this confident in kind of having your act together and your meals packed and you know your mission. Have you always been this way or was there ever a time where you weren't so confident?

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MARK: Definitely not. Like many teachers, I've had my points where I thought about leaving the profession, it was just too much, it was too much stress, too much everything. Too many meetings, too much time it was taking – or so I felt. When I started tackling these things one at a time – this is going to sound weird but – I felt like I became above the problems and before, I was kind of below the. There were too much for me to handle.

VICKI: So what do you mean? How did you move above these because it can get you down? Right now I'm dealing with field day t-shirts and app building and just so many things and I'm just like, "I was just so ready to come home and sit on the couch."

MARK: Again, just the diet and exercise every morning, having my clear purpose. I think when I had that and I really looked at that every morning – I had a morning routine. If you're familiar with Hal Elrod's book.

VICKI: Oh yeah, I love that book great book. Miracle morning. <http://amzn.to/2qgJ79T>

MARK: Yeah, it's fantastic. I kind of look through that every morning and it reminds me, okay. And it's a struggle, it's not easy, it's every day reminding yourself, "this is what I'm grateful for, this is what I need to focus on today. And it's not easy but I do feel – I saw a post recently mu Michael Hyatt, <https://michaelhyatt.com/what-to-do-when-you-find-yourself-over-committed.html> something about having more base between what you need to get done and what you're capable of doing.

VICKI: Well, the thing is it's about capacity because if you think about it, an Interstate can't run at 100% capacity. It shuts down and it's frozen and we as human beings, we can't just be human doings, we have to be human beings, you know.

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MARK: Right. It's a challenge. It's a constant challenge. I think one at a time, we're all capable of improving ourselves and changing the system because it's not going to change on its own. Unfortunately, teachers, we're going to have to improve ourselves one at a time and one area at a time and just improve ourselves to tackle the problem because they're huge and they can eat us alive if we let it.

VICKI: So Mark as we finish up our motivational Monday and you have 30 seconds to give a pep talk to teachers, what do you say to teachers?

MARK: Okay. Love yourself, take care of your body, take care of your mind. Love your students, improve yourself, don't wait for your school to send you professional development. Always be improving yourself physically, mentally and just give the world your best. Don't hold anything back.

VICKI: Such great advice because teachers, you are improving yourself, you're listening to a podcast. You want to be remarkable, you want to help your kids live remarkable lives and you don't get there just doing the same old thing every day. These are common struggles, we all have these struggles, we all get exhausted, we all have those bad days. But hopefully, if we think about what we're thankful for, if we can take good physical care of ourselves.

And mark says in his blog post to be selfish about our health and it's important. So that's all part of being remarkable. So get out there and motivate yourself to really give your best for those kids today because they're so worth it.

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