

LEADERSHIPEDGE

Coaching in Schools



The Monthly Coach - July 2023

Running to Stand Still

As we approach the end of term, the focus on “getting everything done” for a hard stop can feel like we’re approaching a brick wall at breakneck speed. Tasks and jobs get squashed into these final weeks of term and we summon all our energy to race this last leg at full speed. “Come on! Keep Going! Nearly there!”

But... nearly where...? Where are you racing to get to? Is it to catch-up with yourself?



As we consider this typical end-of-term experience, I am minded, in the spirit of holiday adventuring, to draw our attention to the Japanese tradition of [Hanami](#) – “flower-watching” - the annual gathering under blooming cherry blossom trees to eat, drink and enjoy the beauty of nature. This mindfulness is also evident in their traditional Haiku in which every word, indeed every syllable, matters intently. This [intentionality](#) extends to the Japanese philosophy of [kigaj](#), meaning ‘value of life’ in which a person seeks to always be aware of their purpose and contribution.

This perhaps seems a whole world away from our fast-paced culture of “getting everything done.” Yet, isn’t there something worth learning from these ancient traditions, even if we cannot reenact sitting under cherry blossom trees in the middle of a busy school day?

“A mind is like a parachute. It does not work if it is not open.” – Frank Zappa



Pure coaching certainly provides a space in time, a purposeful and contained moment for the presence of your present thoughts and feelings; your aspirations and fears; your challenges and celebrations. People stop and notice: strengths in themselves or others which are not being utilised, exciting opportunities which are not being nurtured, or potential risks which have not been given necessary attention.

This ability to pause, notice and become intentional is incredibly powerful, for both personal wellbeing and professional impact, and it doesn't take a lot of time. It just takes discipline (another central tenant of Japanese culture).

“The best way to take care of the future, is to take care of the present moment.” – Thich Nhat Hanh

So as you approach the end of term at breakneck speed, can you discipline yourself to find 5 minutes a day simply being present with yourself, to notice and become intentional:

- What am I doing?
- What am I not doing?
- How am I feeling?

Perhaps in doing so, you can avoid hitting the wall at breakneck speed, but instead arrive as a calmer, healthier version of yourself, ready to truly enjoy the opportunities the holidays bring.

Our team is very familiar with the pressures of school life, having held or currently holding a school leadership position. We understand the value of the work you do. We recognise the effort and energy you put in, and the pressures around you. But above all, we know that you, your health, and your loved ones are supremely precious.

Enjoy the summer holidays when they arrive and in the meantime, remember to look after yourself, and occasionally pause, take a breath and look up.

Warmest wishes,

Catherine

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Leadership Edge

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If you have enjoyed this think-piece, you can find our back-catalogue [here](#)

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