



Happy Staff = Happy School

Finish Strong

Working in schools can be stressful!

These articles are intended to help the great people who work in schools reduce stress and increase satisfaction.

Key points

November is crazy, don't be surprised. This happens every year.

Our credibility is based on our ability to complete.

We are more susceptible to irritations and poor decisions when our resistance is low.

Instead of going into the 'survival shuffle' try to focus on lifting your head and picking up the pace.

Finish strong!

The best time to plant a tree is twenty years ago.

The second best time is today.

Chinese proverb

The month of November is a crazy time of the year in schools. End of year reporting, class allocations, timetabling, budgets and planning for next year swamp us at a time when our energies are low and many of us feel we are running on empty.

During this time we are more likely to be sensitive, *'thin skinned'* and emotional because we are run down and in need of that well earned break. We shouldn't be surprised. The same things happens at this time every year. The important thing is HOW we respond to this challenge.

Monitoring our self-talk and our sensitivity are particularly important at this time of the year. We are far more susceptible to allowing irritations that would not normally have an affect on us to get to us. Our resistance is low and we are vulnerable to both attack from outside and poor decisions within. Now is the time to watch our words, resist the temptation to *'shoot from the hip'* and make decisions on the run.

It is when times are tough that reputations are truly made. A harsh or insensitive word to someone can undermine our good work in building relationships throughout the year. It is important to be aware of our moods and on guard that we think before we act.

Remember back to the start of the year! Most of us start the year with energy, vim and vigor. We were rejuvenated by the break and were ready to put all of our energies into being as effective as we possibly could. The old adage *'beginners are many, finishers are few'* is worth remembering.

It is important to **finish strong**, just like we started the year! Whilst our reserves may be running low it is vital to remain focused and finish the year well. Our credibility in the eyes of others is based on results. Not just academic results but our ability to complete our projects, meet deadlines and follow tasks through to completion.

"A brand for a company is like a reputation for a person. You earn reputation by trying to do hard things well." Jeff Bezos, Founder & CEO Amazon

Stephen MR Covey talks about when world-class marathon runners *'hit the wall'* and they feel like they can't go on, instead of focusing on their exhaustion and how tired they are feeling and going into the *'survival shuffle'*, they lift up their head and *pick up the pace*. I believe this is a vital mind set for staff in schools at this time of the year. By picking up the pace, you are really saying to yourself that you're not just going to finish, you're going to **finish strong!**



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Steve Francis is an expert in work-life satisfaction and is the author of three books, *'Time Management For Teachers'*, *'A Gr8 Life...Live it now!'* and *'First Semester Can Make or Break You!'*. He was a Principal for 20 years. Steve lives in Brisbane with his wife and two school aged children.