



More or less? Or more and more?

And so the school year is about to start again. I am sure you agree that never in a million years could we have predicted what we would face in the months between January 2020 and now.

Would you ever have imagined that you could be, at once, scared stiff and psychologically supple enough to adapt to all the changes the pandemic forced on us?

Before the pandemic:

- Did you know that you could feel that deeply discouraged yet dauntlessly face your daily tasks?
- Did you know that you could be so super-stressed yet so sensible?
- Angry and anxious yet composed?
- Uncertain yet resolute?
- Fragile yet resilient?

Were you aware that you could grow to be so strong that you could support so many?

That you could lead others without a clear map or plan?

You didn't?

Now you know! You have in fact done and you have actually been all those things.

Even if you look back and only see the hard times or if you look forward and anticipate more hard times to come, the fact is, you are that person.

Now, do you realise that you are able to continue doing and being that person?

SELF-CARE SKILLS FOR TEACHERS

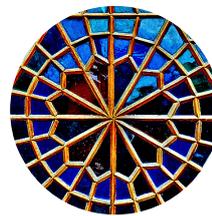
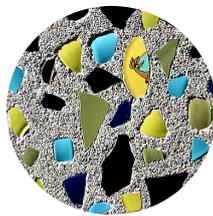
It is not unusual for us to live with multiple **self-states** including contradictory internal perceptions and identities.

The ways we perceive ourselves are based on our memories, our values, our beliefs, and our personalities e.g., 'I think of myself as a robust / sensitive / organised / perceptive / sincere / caring / strict teacher'.

But extreme situations can cause us to question these perceived identities. Maybe I am not as strong / sensible / frail / methodical / kind / impatient as I thought I was.

Identifying different and / or as yet undiscovered aspects of our self-states, whether considered positive or negative, may cause **psychological discomfort**. It is a bit like interacting with myself as if I am a stranger and this is rather stressful.

Who am I really?



We crave authenticity. It is a deep psychological need to know the true me. It gives meaning to our lives, strengthen our self-esteem, deepen our experiences and contribute to our wellbeing.

However our inclination is to use binary categorisation. That way we can make anything complex easier to understand. But it also trips us up in this quest for self-knowledge.

Am I A or am I B? If I am A, then can I also be B?

Can I be strong and at the same time weak; frail and resilient, fearful and brave?

This kind of nuanced thinking, may seem like it makes the world an even more complicated place. Either/or thinking is some much easier. Unfortunately it is also so much more immature (way of looking at ourselves).

We are multidimensional beings and our self-state consist of many identities.

These possibilities are not stacked in columns and rows requiring me to choose this and reject that.

I am more like an intricate mosaic where both A and B and everything else from C to Z exist at the same time. Different aspects may shine brighter at different times but they are all there all the time.

The challenge in 2021 is to continue your journey of self-discovery over some of the same and also new mountains and valleys, highs and lows knowing that you are always more than just this or that.

All the best for 2021 and keep well
Erika

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