How stress and emotion affect learning (and how gratitude can be an antidote).

With the increasing research around brain plasticity and how we learn there is abundant and clear evidence that “emotion and cognitive learning are not separate entities; they work in tandem with one another”. (Tileston 2000)

Stress in the classroom or elsewhere, especially when associated with anxiety releases TMT, or trimethyltin, into the brain. TMT disrupts brain cell development. When it is present in brain regions during short stressful periods, there is impaired short-term memory and work efficiency. After extended periods of stress, TMT is associated with reduction in long-term memory storage and retrieval, motivation, and creative problem solving. While students under stress may appear to work “harder,” the quality of the work decreases. (Kato & McEwen, 2003)

The link between stress and learning is well known!

What I’d like to share with you is a simple wellness strategy that has proven to increase wellbeing in many research studies.

THE “THREE GOOD THINGS”

Gratitude exercise will lift your mood in as little as two minutes per week.

- At the end of the day – Write three good things that happened - things that went well, that you enjoyed or were grateful for.
- Why did they happen? Why did it feel good? For each thing that happened, note a reason.
- Look back – After a week, have a look back on what you’ve written. How does it feel when you look at all the good things? Are there any themes?
- Keep it up - you may find that you don’t need to do it every day, but a few times a week.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Monday</th>
<th>Three things</th>
<th>Why did they happen / Why did it feel good?</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
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<td>2.</td>
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