

The Importance of Giving to Ourselves: Some Tips

We can give to ourselves by:

★ reconsidering boundaries:

- what is happening that might be leading you to burnout or that is testing your empathy?
- what boundary do you need to create around that issue, and enforce or reinforce it

★ reflecting on the role and value of our labor:

- remembering our teaching is labor, and that all laborers need rest, can help us give ourselves the space to rest.

★ adjusting our pedagogy:

- consider what isn't working (for you, your students, or both)
- make adjustments that allow more space and grace

★ starting with making small changes:

- sustained and sustainable change is hard
- Start small—one boundary, a tweak rather than a new design

How Do We Give to Ourselves?

★ Scheduled email breaks:

- Especially for online teachers, it is important to have some time away from email.
- Schedule time, a full day if possible, when students should not expect you to respond.
- If you can't do a full day, start smaller with a couple hour windows twice a week.

- Put this in your syllabus
- ★ Framing work as labor in addition to (or instead of) a vocation:
 - think/talk about what we do as work (even if we love it!),
 - This helps make the need for time away from labor clearer.
 - We are not robots and need the time.
- ★ Small policy or pedagogy changes:
 - For your classroom, make small policy changes to give you (and students!) more time/space/rest.
 - the grace period was my game changer
 - The grace period allows most assignments to be turned in for three days after the due date with no penalty and no permission.
 - I also recently got rid of the annotated bibliography assignment in a class
 - The annotated bib wasn't working well for me or the students, so letting it go made all of us happier
- ★ Regular time (with accountability) for a non-work, self-focused activity:
 - This needs to be something that recharges you (mine is baking!).
 - And you need some accountability.
 - Accountability could be:
 - blocked time in your calendar for the activity or
 - doing something with a friend to build community (and hold you accountable).
 - For me, it's posting the baking on social media

Remember that we are valuable in ourselves and (but not only!) as teachers, so we too are worthy of generosity and empathy from ourselves and others.

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