



***Permission to Feel* by Marc Brackett, Ph.D.**

Think you might want to read this book?

In [Permission to Feel](#), we learn that some of the most important aspects of learning - attention, focus, and memory - are all controlled by our emotions, not by cognition. Marc Brackett helps us understand what emotions are, how to label them, and the information emotions communicate, potentially transforming how administrators and teachers lead and how students learn. By giving ourselves and others permission to feel, we can become better decision-makers and help strengthen relationships between teachers and students as well as teachers and administrators.

What would Socrates ask?

- How would relationships between students and teachers change if both parties felt more free to explore their emotions in meaningful ways?
- How would the school as a workplace transform if teachers and administrators felt more free to explore their emotions in meaningful ways?
- How can we emotionally prepare students for life beyond the classroom?

Research

- In 2017, in collaboration with the New Teacher Center, we surveyed more than five thousand educators and found that they spend nearly 70 percent of their workdays feeling “frustrated”, “overwhelmed”, and “stressed.” This conforms to Gallup data showing that nearly half of U.S. teachers report high stress on a daily basis.
- An experiment at Yale asked teachers to remember either a positive or negative classroom memory before grading student work. The group that was asked to remember a positive memory marked the work almost a full grade higher than the other grade. However, most teachers (87%) reported that their mood did not impact how they graded.
- Research shows that having just one caring adult can make the difference between whether a child will thrive or not.
- High school students, teachers, and business professionals experience negative emotions up to 70 percent of the time they are in school or at work.
- In a survey we distributed to more than five thousand teachers, we found that 70 percent of the emotions they reported feeling each day were negative - mainly “frustrated”, “overwhelmed,” and “stressed. This is especially troubling because teachers who experience more negative emotions are more likely to have sleep problems, anxiety, and depression, be overweight and burned out, and have greater intentions to leave the profession.
- Two meta-analyses have also demonstrated that a systematic process integrating SEL is the common element among schools that report improved relationships between teachers and students, a decrease in emotional challenges and problematic behavior, and an increase in academic success.

Concepts

- We can all become “emotion scientists” by using the “RULER” skills: recognizing our emotions and those of others, understanding our feelings and determining their source, labeling our emotions with a nuanced vocabulary, expressing our feelings in accordance with appropriate cultural norms and social contexts, and regulating our emotions by finding strategies for dealing with what we and others feel.
- Not having a vocabulary to express emotions limits our potential.
- We have to go beyond empathy. Empathy is helpful in understanding another, but cannot help support us in managing our emotions.
- We should work to become “emotion scientists” not “emotion judges”. We should seek to understand the emotions that we feel and others feel without making judgments about them.
- Using words to label our emotions moderates them since language and emotion processing are tightly connected. The more precise we can be in labeling our emotions, the more likely that we will be to get support from others. When we are naming our emotions, our brains and nervous system will calm us down.
- The three more important aspects of learning - attention, focus, and memory - are all controlled by our emotions, not by cognition.
- For students to have rich healthy emotional lives, teachers and school leaders have to be good role models and adopters of social-emotional strategies. SEL has to have buy-in from both the top and the bottom: admin, teachers, and students. If students are going to learn, they have to feel their teacher’s emotional investment.
- Use literature and historic events to help students make connections and work through emotions. It helps us to take the perspectives of others, which is essential to have emotional intelligence.
- In an emotionally intelligent workplace, most challenges are manageable. If the workplace is not emotionally intelligent, everything is a struggle.

Quotes from the author

- “We need to remake education so that it includes emotion skills - so that professional intervention becomes less necessary.”
- “The research is clear: emotions determine whether academic content will be processed deeply and remembered. Linking emotion to learning ensures that students find classroom instruction relevant. It’s what supports students in discovering their purpose and passion, it’s what’s driving their persistence.
- “When kids and adults are given the permission to feel all emotions, and learn how to manage them, it opens doors to collaboration, relationship building, improved decision-making and performance, and greater well-being.”
- “We adults want to believe that the emotional lives of children are less complex and messy than our own, but it’s not so.”
- “SEL is the universal life jacket, keeping students afloat and open to learning. Only when children learn in psychologically safe environments that nurture their emotion skills can they move from helplessness to resilience, from anxiety to action, from scattered to centered, from isolated to connected.”

Implement tomorrow?

- When a child has an outburst in the classroom, our first impulse is often to restore order so that class can continue. We would be well-served to not focus as much on the behavior as what might have caused it.

Organizations/schools working on answers

- [Prospect Sierra](#)
- [Seattle Public Schools](#)
- [Highline Public Schools](#)

Gateways to further learning

- [RULER](#)
- [The Aspen Institute's National Commission on Social, Emotional, and Academic Development](#)

Referenced books with the potential to impact leading and learning in education

Author(s) Last Name	Title
Seppala	<i>The Happiness Track</i>
Salovey & Mayer	<i>At the Heart of Leadership</i>
Goldman	<i>Emotional Intelligence</i>
Caruso & Salovey	<i>The Emotionally Intelligent Manager</i>
Boyce	<i>The Orchid and the Dandelion</i>

The applicability of this book to education is



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