



## *Think Like a Monk* by Jay Shetty

### **Think you might want to read this book?**

In *Think Like a Monk*, Jay Shetty calls his readers to a life of service noting that service fulfills us on many levels. We are born to care for others, so service does us good. By design, teaching is a service profession. How long has it been since you have examined your practice as an educator through the lens of love and as an act of service? Shetty asks readers to examine their lives through the

principles that monks live by including identifying our core values, challenging negativity, confronting fear, finding purpose, adopting routines, highlighting gratitude, and being in healthy relationships with others. If we can do this, our schools will certainly be better places for children.

### **What would Socrates ask?**

- How can identifying our core values make it easier to surround ourselves with the right people, make tough choices, and focus our attention?
- How can creating purity in our hearts help us and those around us live better lives?
- What are you most grateful for and how do you express that to your students and colleagues?
- How can a focus on gratitude help educators fight consistent negative emotions and burnout?
- What can school leaders do to care for educators so that they can be fully present and emotionally available for their students?
- How can educators help students build healthy routines so they get plenty of sleep?

### **Research**

- Multiple studies show that the way we relate to the world around us is contagious. A twenty-year study of people living in a Massachusetts town showed that both happiness and depression spread within social circles. If a friend who lives within a mile of you becomes happier, then the chance that you are also happy increases by 25 percent. The effect jumps higher with next-door neighbors.
- Gratitude has been linked to better mental health, self-awareness, better relationships, and a sense of fulfillment.

### **Concepts**

- Let go of negativity- we have three core emotional needs: peace, love, and understanding. Negativity often springs from a threat to one of the three needs.
- Controlled breathing is an immediate way to steady ourselves. When we experience negative stress, we can use our breath to calm ourselves:
  - 1. Inhale slowly to a count of 4
  - 2. Hold for a count of 4

- 3. Exhale slowly to a count of 4 or more
- 4. Repeat until you feel your heart race slow down.

### Quotes from the author

- “What struck me the most when I studied monk philosophy is that in the last three thousand years, humans haven’t really changed. Sure, we’re taller on average and we live longer, but I was surprised and impressed to find that the monk teachings talk about forgiveness, energy, intentions, living with purpose, and other topics in ways that are as resonant today as they must have been when they were written.”
- “The key to real freedom is self-awareness.”
- “We don’t have a word [in English] for experiencing vicarious joy - joy on behalf of others... If I only find joy in my own success, I’m limiting my joy.”
- “...when we channel the energy behind our fears toward service, we diminish our fear of not having enough, feel happier, more fulfilled, and more connected to the world around us.”
- “To build your competence without regard for character is narcissistic, and to build character without working on skills is devoid of impact. We need to work on both in order to serve our souls and a higher purpose.”
- “The highest purpose is to live in service.”
- “We seek to leave a place cleaner than we found it, people happier than we found them, the world better than we found it.”

### Quotes from others

- “If you think you are too small to make a difference, try sleeping with a mosquito.” - the Dalai Lama
- “We should only speak words that are truthful, beneficial to all, pleasing, and that don’t agitate the minds of others.” - The Bhagavad Gita
- “As long as we keep attaching our happiness to the external events of our lives, which are changing, we’ll always be left waiting for it.” - Tara Brach, founder of the Insight Meditation Community of Washington, D.C.
- “Every day, think as you wake up, today I am fortunate to be alive, I have a precious human life, I am not going to waste it.” - the Dalai Lama
- “The golden way is to be friends with the world and to regard the whole human family as one.” - Gandhi

### Implement tomorrow?

- Teach students to not have their feelings define them. Rather than saying “*I am* afraid” shift to saying “*I feel* afraid.” Feelings are temporary and are part of our experience, but do not need to define us.
- Keep a gratitude journal. At the end of the school day take 5 minutes to write down what you are grateful for. A focus on gratitude can lead us to taking part in other healthy activities and seek care when we are ill.

- Model giving gratitude with your students. This can be a mantra of gratefulness first thing in the morning, before lunch, or before students leave for the school day. Help students make their gratitude as specific as possible.

**Organizations/schools working on answers**

- [Gratefulness.org](http://Gratefulness.org)
- [Insight Meditation Community of Washington, D.C.](http://InsightMeditationCommunity.org)

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

Author(s) Last Name	Title
Ericcson & Pool	<i>Peak</i>
Goleman & Davidson	<i>Altered Traits</i>
McGonical	<i>The Upside of Stress</i>
Lewis	<i>The Rise</i>
Tich Nhat Hanh	<i>How to Love</i>

The applicability of this book to education is ....



This work is licensed under the [CC BY-NC-ND 4.0 International License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/).