


IU1 INTERMEDIATE UNIT 1
 PENNSYLVANIA, GREENE, AND WASHINGTON COUNTIES
Recruitment and Retention

Self-Care Cookbook

Reflections, Recipes, and Resources for Teachers

by Paul K. Fox, PMEA Council for Teacher Training, Recruitment & Retention
 February 9, 2026 — IU1 Wellness Inservice Fair - PennWest Convocation Center, California, PA
paulfox.usc@gmail.com <https://paulfox.blog/> © 2021, 2022, 2023, 2025, 2026 Paul K. Fox

1

© 2026 Paul K. Fox

Targets

2

- ✓ Health & Wellness
- ✓ Stress & Burnout
- ✓ Time Management
- ✓ Self-Care Plan





2

© 2026 Paul K. Fox

What's on the Menu?

3



- **Cook up** things needed to make informed decisions to promote improvements in your own lifelong health, resilience, and wellbeing, and to remediate stress and burnout.
- **NO cookie-cutter**, one-size-fits-all solutions from Chef Fox
- Avoidance of ruined meals, **boil overs** and other kitchen mishaps.

Gourmet meals showcasing fitness and life balance

- Taking inventory of your **pantry cupboard** to review the necessary ingredients to a healthier lifestyle
- Taste of unique/new flavors sampling small **bite-size pieces** for your personal wellness



3

© 2026 Paul K. Fox

4



The BIG Ideas:



4



5



6

© 2026 Paul K. Fox 7

Time + Priorities



The solution is NOT to manage your time better or work more efficiently. Or at least – that's not the place to start when you're overwhelmed.

The most important step is getting clarity: figuring out what matters most so you can do fewer things better.

— Angela Watson

7

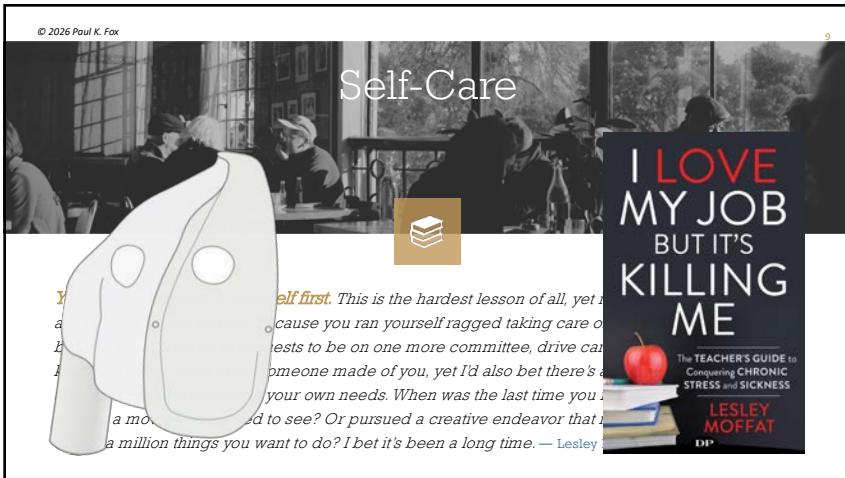
© 2026 Paul K. Fox 8

Self-Care



You must take care of yourself first. This is the hardest lesson of all, yet it is so important. Chances are you got where you are because you ran yourself ragged taking care of other people's needs. I bet you never said no to requests to be on one more committee, drive carpool, watch a friend's kids, and every other favor someone made of you, yet I'd also bet there's a good chance you never take the time to take care of your own needs. When was the last time you read a book for fun? Or went to a movie you wanted to see? Or pursued a creative endeavor that made you happy? Or any one of a million things you want to do? I bet it's been a long time. — Lesley Moffat

8



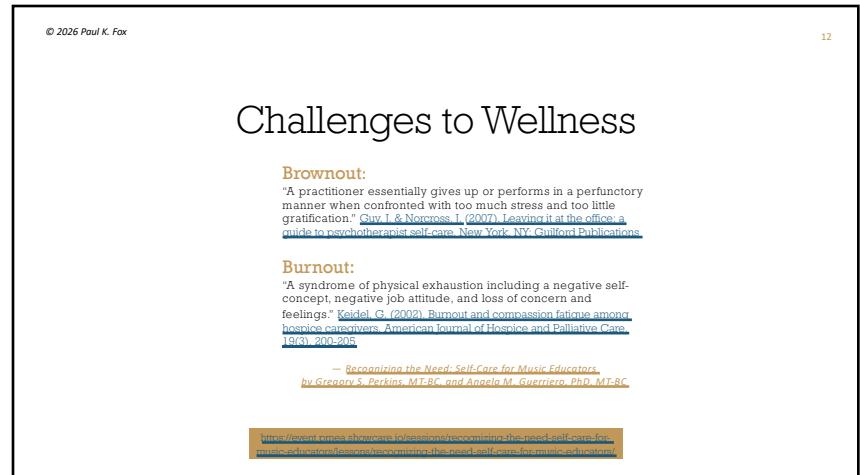
9



10



11



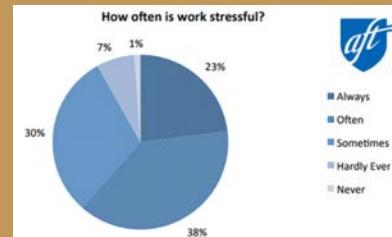
12

© 2026 Paul K. Fox

13

Stressed-Out Teachers?

- ✓ 61% of educators say their work is always or often stressful
- ✓ 50% say they don't have the same enthusiasm as when they started teaching.



<https://www.thegearednetwork.com/blog-all/2018/8/1/crayons-and-cortisol-the-epidemic-of-teacher-stress>

Self-Care Cookbook for 2025 SAS Institute, 2026 DCMEA Winter Conference, IU1 Wellness Inservice, & PMEA Annual Conference <https://paulfox/care.blog/>

13

© 2026 Paul K. Fox

14

The Status of Teaching

How teaching has changed during the 2021-2022 school year:

- 81% – The overall workload has increased.
- 80% – Spending more time addressing students' mental health.
- 71% – Spending more of their own money on classroom materials.
- 69% – Getting students back on track from learning loss.
- 58% – Increase in classroom interruptions during instruction.
- 55% – Less planning time due to staff shortages and other factors.
- 45% – Had to change their curriculum.
- 35% – Received a smaller budget for school supplies.
- 30% – School or districts' priorities changed.
- 25% – Changes to assignments or their classroom.
- 18% – Had less access to instructional tools and materials.

Since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, constant changes have impacted the teaching profession. In March 2022, two years into the pandemic, AdoptAClassroom.org surveyed 4,665 PreK-12 teachers at public, private, and charter schools nationwide to gather teaching statistics to better understand the current state of teaching. Eighty-five percent of the teachers who responded described their school as high-needs, where 50% or more of students receive free or reduced lunch.

<https://www.adoptaclassroom.org/2022/04/12/state-of-teaching-statistics-2022/>

Self-Care Cookbook for 2025 SAS Institute, 2026 DCMEA Winter Conference, IU1 Wellness Inservice, & PMEA Annual Conference <https://paulfox/care.blog/>

14

© 2026 Paul K. Fox

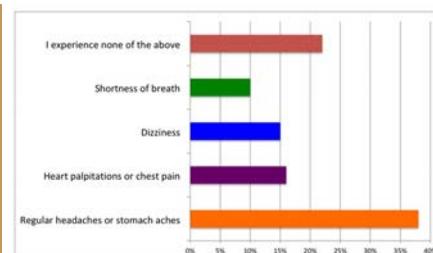
15

Stress-Related Symptoms?

"This is a worrying sign that pressure and workload of many teaching jobs is having a very real physical impact on many teachers."

"7 Conclusions from the World's Largest Teacher Burnout Survey" by James Anthony

<https://notwaitingforsuperman.org/teacher-burnout-statistics/>



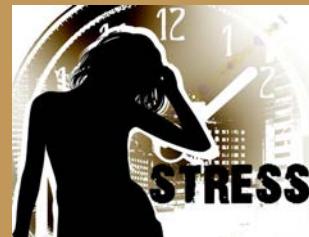
Self-Care Cookbook for 2025 SAS Institute, 2026 DCMEA Winter Conference, IU1 Wellness Inservice, & PMEA Annual Conference <https://paulfox/care.blog/>

15

© 2026 Paul K. Fox

16

Sound familiar?



Self-Care Cookbook for 2025 SAS Institute, 2026 DCMEA Winter Conference, IU1 Wellness Inservice, & PMEA Annual Conference <https://paulfox/care.blog/>

16

- ✓ Overwhelming workload, long hours, and challenging classroom situations
- ✓ Inconsistent hydration and consumption of a balanced diet
- ✓ Irregular amounts of daily aerobic physical exercise
- ✓ Insufficient quantities (length, depth, and frequency) of rest and sleep

© 2026 Paul K. Fox

17

Sound familiar?



- ✓ Infrequent use of sick days or vacations as needed for restorative health
- ✓ Misuse of the voice at work
- ✓ Inadequate hearing conservation and protection from over-exposure to sound

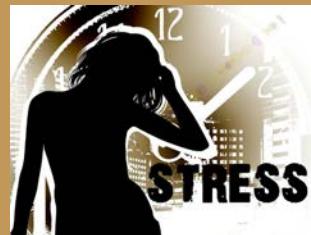
Self-Care Cookbook for 2025 SAS Institute, 2026 DCMEA Winter Conference, IU1 Wellness Inservice, & PMEA Annual Conference <https://paulfox/care.blog/>

17

© 2026 Paul K. Fox

18

Sound familiar?



- ✓ Deficient scheduling of opportunities for mindfulness, meditation, and/or reflection
- ✓ Deprivation of personal outlets for creative self-expression (not related to job)
- ✓ Lack of time to explore hobbies, interests, and socialization with family, friends, and loved ones

Self-Care Cookbook for 2025 SAS Institute, 2026 DCMEA Winter Conference, IU1 Wellness Inservice, & PMEA Annual Conference <https://paulfox/care.blog/>

18

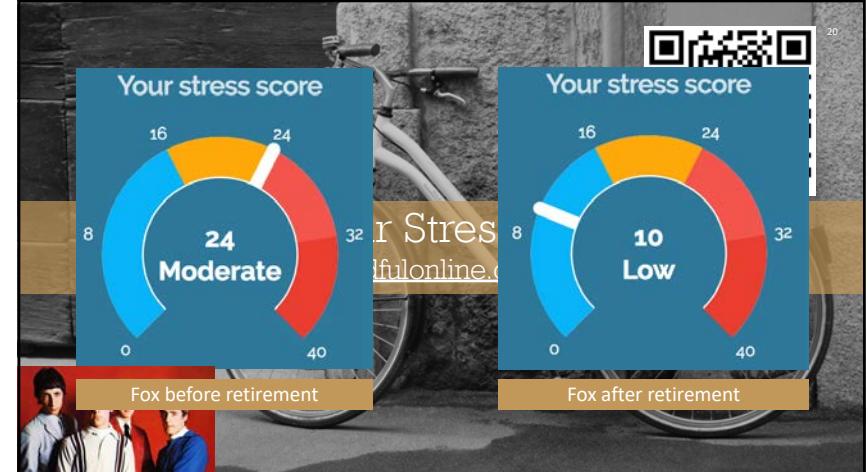
© 2026 Paul K. Fox

19

Test Your Stress Levels:

<https://www.bemindfulonline.com/test-your-stress/>

19

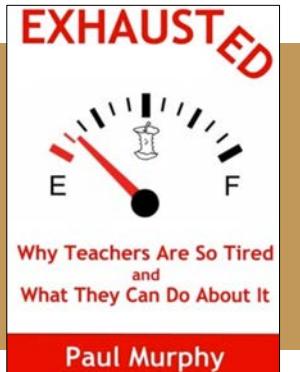


© 2026 Paul K. Fox

Are We Just Tired?

- ✓ "I feel like work never ends."
- ✓ "I'm exhausted, and every weekend, I spend at least one day in my pajamas."
- ✓ "I love my students, and I have a really good class this year, but I'm done and ready for a break."
- ✓ I was so tired that I ended up missing out on... [anything personal like] family dinner."

— Paul Murphy

Self-Care Cookbook for 2025 SAS Institute, 2026 DCMEA Winter Conference, IU1 Wellness Inservice, & PMEA Annual Conference <https://paulfox/care.blog/>

21

© 2026 Paul K. Fox

How Many Decisions?



- ✓ Sleeping-in an extra 10-15 minutes
- ✓ Watching morning news on TV instead of finishing your lesson plans
- ✓ Stopping by Dunkin Donuts on the way
- ✓ Chatting with colleagues in the teacher's room vs. getting work done on the photocopier
- ✓ Logging into personal email or Facebook instead of doing grades, etc.

Self-Care Cookbook for 2025 SAS Institute, 2026 DCMEA Winter Conference, IU1 Wellness Inservice, & PMEA Annual Conference <https://paulfox/care.blog/>

22

© 2026 Paul K. Fox

How Many Decisions?

- ✓ Sleeping-in an extra 10-15 minutes
- ✓ Watching morning news on TV instead of finishing your lesson plans
- ✓ Stopping by Dunkin Donuts on the way
- ✓ Chatting with colleagues in the teacher's room vs. getting work done on the photocopier
- ✓ Logging into personal email or Facebook instead of doing grades, etc.

"Teachers use a lot of willpower... often exercise some form of self-control 14 or more times before students ever enter their class."

— Paul Murphy

Self-Care Cookbook for 2025 SAS Institute, 2026 DCMEA Winter Conference, IU1 Wellness Inservice, & PMEA Annual Conference <https://paulfox/care.blog/>

23

© 2026 Paul K. Fox

Science of Exhaustion

- ✓ Baumeister study: the link between self-control and fatigue

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zbuidM4elto&t=396s>Self-Care Cookbook for 2025 SAS Institute, 2026 DCMEA Winter Conference, IU1 Wellness Inservice, & PMEA Annual Conference <https://paulfox/care.blog/>

24

© 2026 Paul K. Fox

Science of Exhaustion

- ✓ Baumeister study: the link between self-control and fatigue
- ✓ Willpower "wears out" like a muscle?
- ✓ The physical consequences of ego depletion & delayed gratification
- ✓ The effects of self-regulation on blood glucose (& why time of the day is key!)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ibuidM4elto&t=396s>

EXHAUSTED



Why Teachers Are So Tired and What They Can Do About It

Paul Murphy

25

Self-Care Cookbook for 2025 SAS Institute, 2026 DCMEA Winter Conference, IU1 Wellness Inservice, & PMEA Annual Conference <https://paulfox/care.blog/>

© 2026 Paul K. Fox

Science of Exhaustion

- ✓ Baumeister study: the link between self-control and fatigue
- ✓ Willpower "wears out" like a muscle?
- ✓ The physical consequences of ego depletion & delayed gratification
- ✓ The effects of self-regulation on blood glucose (& why time of the day is key!)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ibuidM4elto&t=396s>

EXHAUSTED



Why Teachers Are So Tired and What They Can Do About It

Paul Murphy

26

26

Self-Care Cookbook for 2025 SAS Institute, 2026 DCMEA Winter Conference, IU1 Wellness Inservice, & PMEA Annual Conference <https://paulfox/care.blog/>

© 2026 Paul K. Fox

Over Strict Regimen?



6:30 a.m. an hour of cardio	11:30 a.m. playing nine holes
7:30 a.m. one hour of lower-body weight training	2:00 p.m. healthy lunch
8:30 a.m. high protein/low-fat breakfast	2:30 p.m. two to four more hours on the golf course
9:00 a.m. two hours on the driving range	6:00 p.m. back in the gym working on upper-body
11:00 a.m. practicing putting	7:00 p.m. dinner and relaxation.

Self-Care Cookbook for 2025 SAS Institute, 2026 DCMEA Winter Conference, IU1 Wellness Inservice, & PMEA Annual Conference <https://paulfox/care.blog/>

© 2026 Paul K. Fox

Over Strict Regimen?



✓ Extra-marital affairs	✓ DUI arrest
✓ Personal calls to escort services	✓ Divorce
✓ Wife, discovering his "extra-curricular" activities, assaulting him	✓ Destruction of his reputation
	✓ Injuries
	✓ Poor golf play

"...His remarkable self-discipline left him depleted to the point that he was unable to fight off his most destructive urges at the close of his ego-depleting days." — Paul Murphy

28

28

Self-Care Cookbook for 2025 SAS Institute, 2026 DCMEA Winter Conference, IU1 Wellness Inservice, & PMEA Annual Conference <https://paulfox/care.blog/>

© 2026 Paul K. Fox 29

Remedies

- ✓ Work less/fewer hours
- ✓ Time before school is worth more than twice as much as time after school
- ✓ Use class time to check student work
- ✓ Leverage technology
- ✓ Don't grade everything
- ✓ Stop assigning things

— Paul Murphy

EXHAUSTED

Why Teachers Are So Tired and What They Can Do About It

Paul Murphy

Self-Care Cookbook for 2025 SAS Institute, 2026 DCMEA Winter Conference, IU1 Wellness Inservice, & PMEA Annual Conference <https://paulfox/care.blog/>

29

© 2026 Paul K. Fox 30

<https://www.scholastic.com/teachers/blog-posts/nancyvan/15-ways-reduce-teacher-stress/>

Stress Reduction

Work out! **Get up early!** **Don't take things home.** **Don't overcommit yourself.**

Don't correct every piece of paper. **Spend time with your family/friends.** **Take ten minutes a day and meditate.**

Stay away from negativity. **Learn something new.** **Plan a trip.**

Close the door during prep time.
Make a SHORT and DOABLE "Must Do" and "May Do" lists.
Delegate items to parent volunteers.
Lay out your outfit and prep your healthy lunch the night before.
Get a full eight hours of sleep.

30

© 2026 Paul K. Fox 31

De-Stress Strategies

1. Embrace the stress
2. Be imperfect
3. Practice emotional first aid
4. Be grateful
5. Limit "grass is greener" thinking
6. Work smarter, not harder
7. Ask for help
8. Make a connection
9. Breathe (properly)

— Chris Mumford <https://www.wsu.edu/heyteach/article/9-stress-management-strategies-every-teacher-needs-know1617.html>

Hey Teach!
The resources to thrive and the tools to survive—as an educator.

Self-Care Cookbook for 2025 SAS Institute, 2026 DCMEA Winter Conference, IU1 Wellness Inservice, & PMEA Annual Conference <https://paulfox/care.blog/>

31

© 2026 Paul K. Fox 32

Coping & Learning "Acceptance"

Name "God grant me the serenity...
This to accept the things I cannot change,
Tune... the courage to change the things I can, and
 the wisdom to know the difference."

“ I think I was getting, like, a little bit over the top with [the party fashion] – getting pretty tired and pretty wasted. And I went to bed one night and had a kind of restless night. But I had a dream where my mother, who had been dead at that point for about 10 years, came to me in the dream and it was as if she could see that I was troubled. And she sort of said to me, she said, 'Let it be.' And I remember quite clearly her saying, 'Let it be,' and 'It's going to be OK. Don't worry.' You know, 'Let it be.' I woke up and I remembered the dream, and I thought, 'Well, that's a great idea.' And I then sat down and wrote the song using the feeling from that dream and of my mum coming to me in the dream. Sir James Paul McCartney

Self-Care Cookbook for 2025 SAS Institute, 2026 DCMEA Winter Conference, IU1 Wellness Inservice, & PMEA Annual Conference <https://paulfox/care.blog/>

32

© 2026 Paul K. Fox

33

Coping & Learning “Acceptance”

It's Not Your Sandbox!

“I think I was getting, like, a little bit over the top with [the party fashion] – getting pretty tired and pretty wasted. And I went to bed one night and had a kind of restless night. But I had a dream where my mother, who had been dead at that point for about 10 years, came to me in the dream and it was as if she could see that I was troubled. And she sort of said to me, she said, ‘Let it be.’ And I remember quite clearly her saying, ‘Let it be,’ and ‘It’s going to be OK. Don’t worry.’ You know, ‘Let it be.’ I woke up and I remembered the dream, and I thought, ‘Well, that’s a great idea.’ And I then sat down and wrote the song using the feeling from that dream and of my mum coming to me in the dream. Sir James Paul McCartney

Self-Care Cookbook for 2025 SAS Institute, 2026 DCMEA Winter Conference, IU1 Wellness Inservice, & PMEA Annual Conference <https://paulfox/care.blog/>

33

© 2026 Paul K. Fox

34

Signs of Burnout



Physical

Tired, lowered immunity, illnesses, aches & pains, loss of appetite or sleep.



Emotional

Sense of self-doubt, failure, helplessness, loneliness, cynicism, loss of satisfaction/motivation.



Behavioral

Withdrawal, isolation, skipping work, procrastination, frustration, overuse of food, drugs, alcohol.

<https://www.helpguide.org/articles/stress/burnout-prevention-and-recovery.htm>

Self-Care Cookbook for 2025 SAS Institute, 2026 DCMEA Winter Conference, IU1 Wellness Inservice, & PMEA Annual Conference <https://paulfox/care.blog/>

34

© 2026 Paul K. Fox

35

Burnout Symptoms



- ✓ Disillusionment over the job
- ✓ Cynicism at work
- ✓ Impatience with co-workers, administrators, and students
- ✓ Lack of satisfaction in accomplishments

— Mayo Clinic

Self-Care Cookbook for 2025 SAS Institute, 2026 DCMEA Winter Conference, IU1 Wellness Inservice, & PMEA Annual Conference <https://paulfox/care.blog/>

35

© 2026 Paul K. Fox

36

Burnout Symptoms



- ✓ Dragging themselves to work and trouble getting started once they’re there
- ✓ Lack of energy
- ✓ Unexplained aches/pains
- ✓ Self-medication with food, drugs, or alcohol
- ✓ Changes in sleep/eating patterns

— Mayo Clinic

Self-Care Cookbook for 2025 SAS Institute, 2026 DCMEA Winter Conference, IU1 Wellness Inservice, & PMEA Annual Conference <https://paulfox/care.blog/>

36

© 2026 Paul K. Fox

37

Recognize These?

The logo for Education Week Teacher, featuring the words "EDUCATION WEEK" in a smaller, white, sans-serif font above the word "TEACHER" in a large, bold, white, sans-serif font. The entire logo is set against a solid red rectangular background.

- **Exhaustion.** This is a fatigue so deep that there's no way to "turn it off," no matter how badly you want to. It's deep in your bones. The kind of tired where you just want to ooze into your bed and disconnect from life.
- **Extreme graveness.** Realizing you go hours without smiling or laughing, or days without a belly laugh.
- **Anxiety.** The constant, nagging feeling that you can and should do more, while simultaneously realizing you need to unplug and spend more time with your family. But there are so many things to do.
- **Being overwhelmed.** Questioning how they can possibly add one more task, expectation, or mandate to your plate. Compromising your values of excellence just so you can check-off 15 more boxes to stay in compliance. All the while knowing it still won't be enough.
- **Seeking.** Losing your creativity, imagination, patience, and enthusiasm for daily challenges. Craving reflection time and productive collaboration rather than group complaining.
- **Isolation.** Wanting to head for the deepest, darkest cave where no one will see your vulnerability. A place where your limits are unseen and unquestioned and all is quiet.

<https://www.edweek.org/teach/article/2014/05/20/ctq-niillas-signs-of-solutions-for-burnout.html>

Self-Care Cookbook for 2025 SAS Institute, 2026 DCMEA Winter Conference, IU1 Wellness Inservice, & PMEA Annual Conference <https://paulfox.care.blog/>

37

38

© 2026 Paul K. Fox

39

Kappa Phi Delta Kappan

— "The Problem with Stories About Teacher Burnout" by Doris Santoro in *Kappan* December 2019/January 2020

Burnout = Demoralization

- ✓ Teachers feel frustrated from accomplishing good work that benefits students, communities, and the profession.
- ✓ Problem is external and does not indicate a "weakness" or lie within the individual teachers themselves.
- ✓ Dissatisfaction in education is due to moral and ethical conflicts.

Self-Care Cookbook for 2025 SAS Institute, 2026 DCMEA Winter Conference, IU1 Wellness Inservice, & PMEA Annual Conference <https://paulfox.care.blog/>

39

© 2026 Paul K. Fox 40

Burnout = Demoralization



— "The Problem with Stories About Teacher Burnout" by Doris Santoro in *Kappan* December 2019/January 2020

- ✓ Teachers feel like they are not doing good work and are not making a difference in their communities.
- ✓ Problematic stories about teachers' "weaknesses" and "failures" contribute to burnout.
- ✓ The proposed remedies for burnout (self-care, boundaries, resilience) are unlikely to alleviate the pain of demoralization.
- ✓ Dissatisfaction in education is due to moral and ethical conflicts.

"The proposed remedies for burnout (self-care, boundaries, resilience) are unlikely to alleviate the pain of demoralization."

40

© 2026 Paul K. Fox 41

Burnout = Demoralization



— "The Job of a Teacher" Kappan December 2020

About the author in 2020

DEMORALIZED
Why Teachers Leave the Profession and How They Can Stay
DORIS A. SANTORO
University of David E. Santoro

- ✓ Teachers feel good working in a community.
- ✓ Problem is "weakness" of teachers.
- ✓ Dissatisfaction in education is due to moral and ethical conflicts.

"Only by addressing the moral sources of teacher's anguish might we stem the tide of teacher exodus."

Self-Care Cookbook for 2025 SAS Institute, 2026 DCMEA Winter Conference, IU1 Wellness Inservice, & PMEA Annual Conference <https://paulfox/care.blog/>

41

© 2026 Paul K. Fox 42

More Links on Burnout



- <https://naime.org/teacher-burnout-is-real-signs-and-how-to-avoid-it/>
- <https://www.edutopia.org/blog/5-tips-avoiding-teacher-burnout-mary-beeth-herr>
- <https://www.edweek.org/teach/article/2014/05/20/ctq-dollars-signs-solutions-for-burnout.html>
- <https://www.washingtonpost.com/money/answer-sheet/wp/2014/12/12/teacher-the-dav-i-knew-for-sure-i-was-burned-out/?noredirect=on>

42

© 2026 Paul K. Fox 43

Definition of Self-Care




What it is...

Something we do deliberately for our mental, emotional and physical health.

<https://psychcentral.com/blog/what-self-care-is-and-what-it-isnt-2/>

What it isn't...

Not something we force ourselves to do or something we don't enjoy doing.

Self-Care Cookbook for 2025 SAS Institute, 2026 DCMEA Winter Conference, IU1 Wellness Inservice, & PMEA Annual Conference <https://paulfox/care.blog/>

43

© 2026 Paul K. Fox 44

Self-Care




- ✓ Key to living a balanced life
- ✓ It's something you actively plan, not allow to just happen!
- ✓ Be aware of what you do, why you do it, how it feels, and what the outcomes are.

44

© 2026 Paul K. Fox
<https://paulfoxcentral.com/2016/01/tips-on-self-care-and-what-time-2/>



Tips on Self-Care

- ✓ Create a NO list.
- ✓ Promote a nutritious, healthy diet.
- ✓ Get enough sleep.
- ✓ Exercise.
- ✓ Follow-up with medical care.
- ✓ Use relaxation exercises and/or practice meditation.

45

© 2026 Paul K. Fox
<https://paulfoxcentral.com/2016/01/tips-on-self-care-and-what-time-2/>

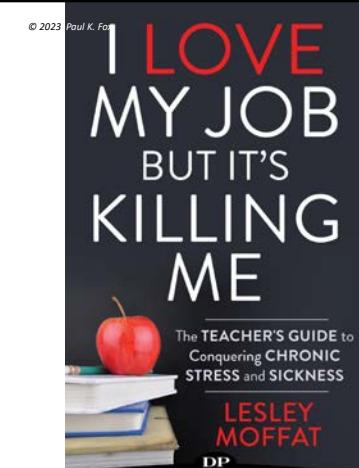


Tips on Self-Care

- ✓ Spend enough time with loved ones.
- ✓ Do at least one relaxing activity every day, whether it's taking a walk or spending 30 minutes unwinding.
- ✓ Do at least one pleasurable activity every day, from going to the cinema, cooking, or meeting with friends.
- ✓ Find opportunities to laugh. 

46

© 2023 Paul K. Fox
<https://paulfoxcentral.com/2016/08/i-love-my-job-but-its-killing-me-before-and-after/>



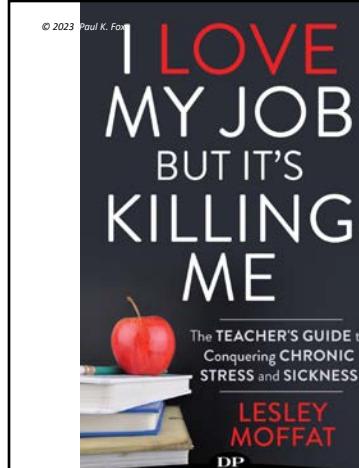
Before...

- ✓ ADHD Symptoms
- ✓ Allergies
- ✓ Arthritis
- ✓ Asthma
- ✓ Acid Reflux and Indigestion
- ✓ Back Pain and Surgery
- ✓ Chronic Exhaustion
- ✓ Depression
- ✓ Migraines
- ✓ Overweight
- ✓ Sleep Disorders
- ✓ Wanted to Leave Teaching

August 2016

47

© 2023 Paul K. Fox
<https://paulfoxcentral.com/2016/08/i-love-my-job-but-its-killing-me-before-and-after/>



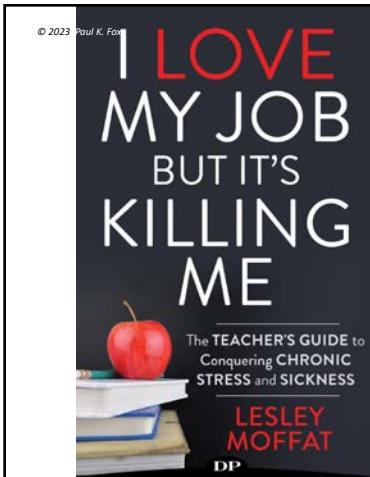
Before and After

August 2016



January 2019

48

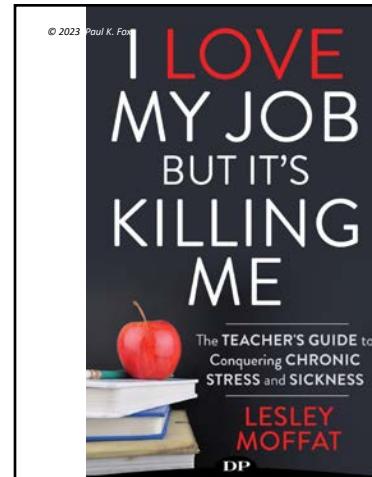


49

Mpower Method

-  Meals
-  Movement
-  Music
-  Mindfulness

49



50

Mojo Meter

1. I have a lot of aches and pains. T F
2. I often feel tired after eating. T F
3. My memory doesn't seem to be as sharp as it used to be. T F
4. Other people have mentioned that I seem down, upset, or not myself. T F
5. I experience a lot of brain fog. T F
6. I don't have enough energy to get me through my days without it being a struggle. T F
7. I experience digestive issues several times a week. T F
8. I feel tired a lot of the time. T F
9. I get a lot of illnesses, like colds, sinus infections, and other common and contagious ailments. T F
10. I don't have any energy in reserve. T F
11. My weight is higher than what feels good. T F
12. I experience frequent bloating. T F
13. Sometimes I feel like all I want to do is cry and escape the exhaustion. T F
14. I am at a weight that doesn't feel good. T F
15. I don't have a regular (4+ times per week) exercise routine. T F
16. My desk / workspace feels cluttered. T F
17. My house feels cluttered. T F
18. My closets are disorganized. T F
19. Even though I like my job, I often dread going to work. T F
20. My car is messy. T F
21. I feel like there's never enough time to get things done. T F

50

STATEMENT	GRAINS OR AT LEAST GLUTEN	CARBS naturally found in foods	DAIRY	MEAT	SUGAR Added sugars & sweeteners
I have a lot of aches and pains.					
I often feel tired after eating.					
My memory doesn't seem to be as sharp as it used to be.					
Other people have mentioned that I seem down or upset or not myself.					
I experience a lot of brain fog.					
I don't have enough energy to get me through my days without it being a struggle.					
I experience digestive issues several times a week.					
I feel tired a lot of the time.					
I get a lot of illnesses, like colds, sinus infections, and other common and contagious ailments.					
I don't have any energy in reserve.					
My weight is higher than what feels good.					
I experience frequent bloating.					
Sometimes I feel like all I want to do is cry and escape the exhaustion.					

51

STATEMENT	GRAINS OR AT LEAST GLUTEN	CARBS naturally found in foods	DAIRY	MEAT	SUGAR Added sugars & sweeteners
I have a lot of aches and pains.					
I often feel tired after eating.					
My memory doesn't seem to be as sharp as it used to be.					
Other people have mentioned that I seem down or upset or not myself.					
I experience a lot of brain fog.					
I don't have enough energy to get me through my days without it being a struggle.					
I experience digestive issues several times a week.					
I feel tired a lot of the time.					
I get a lot of illnesses, like colds, sinus infections, and other common and contagious ailments.					
I don't have any energy in reserve.					
My weight is higher than what feels good.					
I experience frequent bloating.					
Sometimes I feel like all I want to do is cry and escape the exhaustion.					

According to Thomas Oppong, get rid of most...

Clutter
Feeding comfort
Sitting still
Distractions
Consuming media
Multi-tasking



52

© 2026 Paul K. Fox

53

Changing Habits...

- ✓ Take a break from social media.
- ✓ Seek out ways to compliment others.
- ✓ Allow someone to go ahead of you in line at the store.
- ✓ Set your alarm for nine minutes earlier and use those nine minutes to listen to an inspiring song.



— Lesley Moffat

Self-Care Cookbook for 2025 SAS Institute, 2026 DCMEA Winter Conference, IU1 Wellness Inservice, & PMEA Annual Conference <https://paulfox/care.blog/>

53

© 2026 Paul K. Fox

54

Changing Habits...

- ✓ Turn off notifications on your phone.
- ✓ Take a "stay-cation" by spending the night in another room of your house.
- ✓ Change your alarm sound to something soothing.
- ✓ Avoid electronic devices for the first hour of your day.



— Lesley Moffat

Self-Care Cookbook for 2025 SAS Institute, 2026 DCMEA Winter Conference, IU1 Wellness Inservice, & PMEA Annual Conference <https://paulfox/care.blog/>

54

© 2026 Paul K. Fox

55

<https://www.shetheteacher.com/4-simple-steps-to-being-a-happier-and-healthier-music-teacher/>

Traffic bump deep breathing



Maintain office hours

Coda: Summary of Advice for Better Self-Care (Chapter 10)

1. Take deep breaths when you encounter speed bumps and stop signs during your daily commute.
2. Write a cover page to your syllabus outlining appropriate times and methods for parents and students to contact you.
3. Have a work space that is exclusively yours, including a "do not disturb" sign, closed door, and/or noise-cancelling headphones.
4. Talk to your boss about reasonable expectations, including how many after-school and evening events are anticipated.
5. Enlist the help of others (volunteers, boosters, etc.).
6. Start your mornings in a way that charges you up for the day.
7. Re-evaluate your work space and make changes that will be conducive for more efficiency.
8. Plan meals and make time to eat them.
9. Stay hydrated.
10. Incorporate time to upgrade yourself.
11. Ask yourself, "Does this choice align with who I am?"
12. Come up with a self-care plan that is sustainable.

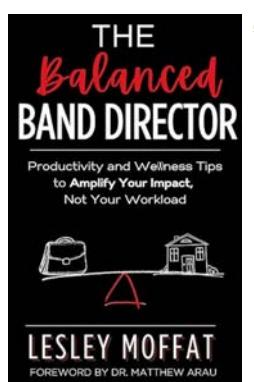
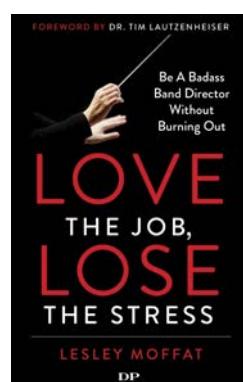
"Do Not Disturb" sign

<https://paulfox.blog/care>

55

© 2026 Paul K. Fox

56

More publications from Lesley Moffat... <https://mpowerededucator.com/>Self-Care Cookbook for 2025 SAS Institute, 2026 DCMEA Winter Conference, IU1 Wellness Inservice, & PMEA Annual Conference <https://paulfox/care.blog/>

56

© 2026 Paul K. Fox



MEJ Self-Care Plan

- ✓ "Health and Wellness for In-Service and Future Music Teachers" by Christa Kuebel *Music Educators Journal*, June 2019
- ✓ Is it stress or more than stress?
- ✓ Implementing a realistic and effective teacher self-care plan
- ✓ Investing in yourself

Self-Care Cookbook for 2025 SAS Institute, 2026 DCMEA Winter Conference, IU1 Wellness Inservice, & PMEA Annual Conference <https://paulfox/care.blog/>

57

© 2026 Paul K. Fox



It's All About Goals

- ✓ Focus on 1-3 area(s) of self-care that reflect(s) your greatest needs: physical, mental, emotional, social, academic/professional, or spiritual.
- ✓ Write one self-care goal for this week. Remember to be S.M.A.R.T. (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and time-bound).
- ✓ Schedule your self-care goal.

Self-Care Cookbook for 2025 SAS Institute, 2026 DCMEA Winter Conference, IU1 Wellness Inservice, & PMEA Annual Conference <https://paulfox/care.blog/>

58

Suggestions for Self-Care

Figure adapted from Laurie Pearlman and Karen Saakvitne, *Transforming the Pain: A Workbook on Vicarious Traumatization* (New York: Norton, 1996) and "Developing a Self-Care Plan," ReachOut Schools, accessed April 18, 2018. <https://schools.au.reachout.com/articles/developing-a-self-care-plan>

Physical	Emotional	Mental	Professional	Social	Spiritual
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exercise regularly. • Practice healthful sleep habits. • Eat nutritious foods. • Eat regularly. • Limit or reduce the use of stimulants such as caffeine. • Take time off when sick. • Stay hydrated. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use positive self-talk. • Practice mindfulness. • Try meditation or relaxation techniques such as breathing exercises, progressive muscle relaxation, or guided imagery. • Learn something new. • Visit a professional counselor. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disconnect from social media, computer, and TV. • Write in a journal. • Read something unrelated to school/ work. • Create something. • Learn something new. • Consider your workload before accepting new responsibilities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Find balance in activities through time management strategies. • Avoid procrastination. • Set realistic goals • Work in a place that is conducive to productivity. • Set boundaries and cut back when needed. • Set time for reflection. • Identify what is meaningful and its place in your life. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seek the support of friends, family, or on-campus resources • Make time for reflection. • Schedule dates with friends and partners. • Make time to communicate with friends and family far away. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make a gratitude list. • Pray or go to a service • Make time for reflection. • Join organizations that interest you. • Make time for communication with friends and family far away.



59

© 2026 Paul K. Fox

The 3 R's of Teacher Self-Care



Reflect

"Self-reflection is necessary to fostering emotional wellness as it allows us to avoid unhealthy patterns and live a fulfilling and authentic life."

<https://www.rhs.org/education/blogs/voices-in-education/the-3-rs-for-teacher-self-care-reflect-release-recharge/>



Release

A ritual to "let go of unfinished business, grief, and other regrets" you may inevitably have at the end of your school year.

by Dr. Charmain Jackman



Recharge

"...prioritizing themselves approaching self-care in small, bite-sized activities and creating visual cues for change."

59

60

The image shows the front cover of a book titled "FEWER THINGS, BETTER" by ANGELA WATSON. The cover is white with a blue circular graphic in the center. The title is written in white, bold, sans-serif font. Below the title, a subtitle reads "THE COURAGE TO FOCUS ON WHAT MATTERS MOST". The background of the cover features a repeating pattern of small, colorful icons related to productivity and organization, such as a lightbulb, a notepad, a coffee cup, a laptop, and a house. The book is positioned on the left side of the slide, with a brown vertical bar to its left. The title "Aligning Priorities" is displayed in a large, black, serif font on the right side of the slide. A numbered list of five steps for prioritization is listed below the title.

61

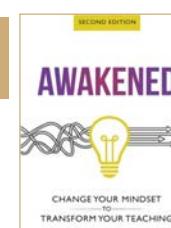
<div[](https://paulfox.ca/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/Screen-Shot-2024-01-10-at-11.30.20-1024x576.jpg)

62

63



More on Cognitive Distortions



© 2026 Paul K. Fox

SPROUT 64

Similar to MEJ article:

- Over-generalizing (too little evidence)
- Assuming Permanence (problems will exist forever)
- Catastrophizing (magnifying negatives)
- False helplessness
- Polarized thinking

"Much of the time when we think we are being realistic, we are actually operating from a very distinctive cognitive bias."

64

© 2026 Paul K. Fox

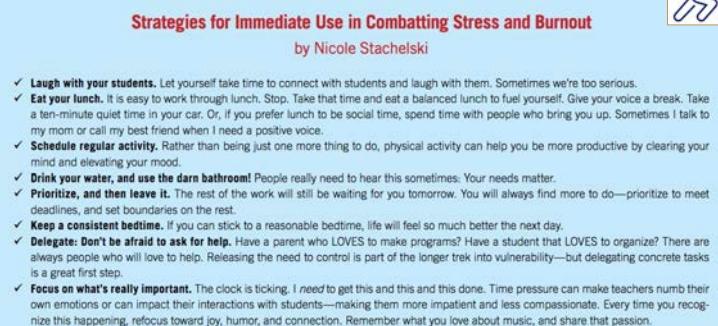


SPRINT 65

More Recipes for 'De-Stressing' All Teachers

65

© 2026 Paul K. Fox



Strategies for Immediate Use in Combatting Stress and Burnout
by Nicole Stachelski

- ✓ **Laugh with your students.** Let yourself take time to connect with students and laugh with them. Sometimes we're too serious.
- ✓ **Eat your lunch.** It is easy to work through lunch. Stop. Take that time and eat a balanced lunch to fuel yourself. Give your voice a break. Take a ten-minute quiet time in your car. Or, if you prefer lunch to be social time, spend time with people who bring you up. Sometimes I talk to my mom or call my best friend when I need a positive voice.
- ✓ **Schedule regular activity.** Rather than being just one more thing to do, physical activity can help you be more productive by clearing your mind and elevating your mood.
- ✓ **Drink your water, and use the darn bathroom!** People really need to hear this sometimes. Your needs matter.
- ✓ **Prioritize, and then leave it.** The rest of the work will still be waiting for you tomorrow. You will always find more to do—prioritize to meet deadlines, and set boundaries on the rest.
- ✓ **Keep a consistent bedtime.** If you can stick to a reasonable bedtime, life will feel so much better the next day.
- ✓ **Delegate: Don't be afraid to ask for help.** Have a parent who LOVES to make programs? Have a student that LOVES to organize? There are always people who will love to help. Releasing the need to control is part of the longer trek into vulnerability—but delegating concrete tasks is a great first step.
- ✓ **Focus on what's really important.** The clock is ticking. I need to get this and this and this done. Time pressure can make teachers numb their own emotions or can impact their interactions with students—making them more impatient and less compassionate. Every time you recognize this happening, refocus toward joy, humor, and connection. Remember what you love about music, and share that passion.

<https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/0027432119873701>

Self-Care Cookbook for 2025 SAS Institute, 2026 DCMEA Winter Conference, IU1 Wellness Inservice, & PMEA Annual Conference <https://paulfox/care.blog/>

66

© 2026 Paul K. Fox



SPRINT 67

Self-Care Tips for Teachers

1. Create a relaxing classroom ambiance
2. Set boundaries to protect your peace
3. Prioritize your mental health by connecting with a therapist
4. Practice mindful breathing during breaks
5. Keep a reflective journal
6. Connect with other teachers
7. Integrate movement into your day
8. Prepare healthy, energizing snacks
9. Engage in professional development that engages you
10. Create a calm morning routine
11. Unplug after school and leave work at work

Talkspace
<https://www.talkspace.com/blog/self-care-for-teachers/>

Self-Care Cookbook for 2025 SAS Institute, 2026 DCMEA Winter Conference, IU1 Wellness Inservice, & PMEA Annual Conference <https://paulfox/care.blog/>

67

© 2026 Paul K. Fox



SPRINT 68

Breathe like the Navy SEALS

TACTICAL BREATHING (alleviate fight/flight tension)

1. Place right hand on your belly, pushing out with a big exhale.
2. Breathe in through your nostrils, slowly drawing the breath upward from your belly to your upper chest.
3. Pause and exhale, starting from your chest and moving downward to the air in your belly. Imagine your belly button touching your spine.
4. Once you're comfortable with a full, deep breath, repeat it, this time making the exhale twice as long as the length of the inhale. For example, inhale to the count of four, pause briefly, and exhale to the count of eight.
5. Repeat three times.

BOXED BREATHING (helps to ground you, sharpen your concentration, become more alert and calmer)

1. Expel all of the air from your lungs.
2. Keep them empty for four seconds.
3. Inhale through your nose to a count of four.
4. Hold for a four count.
5. Exhale for a four count.
6. Repeat: 10-20 minutes.



— Norma Nazish

Self-Care Cookbook for 2025 SAS Institute, 2026 DCMEA Winter Conference, IU1 Wellness Inservice, & PMEA Annual Conference <https://paulfox/care.blog/>

68

© 2026 Paul K. Fox

How's Your Work/Life Balance?

Self-Care Cookbook for DCMEA Winter Conference on January 30, 2026, and PMEA Annual Conference on April 23, 2026.

<https://paulfox/care.blog/>

69

© 2026 Paul K. Fox

Does this desk look familiar?

70

© 2026 Paul K. Fox

"Time Management on the Rocks"

CELEBRATING 30 YEARS
OVER 30 MILLION COPIES SOLD

7 HABITS OF HIGHLY EFFECTIVE PEOPLE

POWERFUL LESSONS IN PERSONAL CHANGE
WITH A FOREWORD BY JIM COLLINS, author of Good to Great and co-author of Great by Choice

Stephen R. Covey

1 Habit 1: Be Proactive
Focus and act on what you can control and influence instead of what you can't.

2 Habit 2: Begin with the End in Mind
Define clear measures of success and a plan to achieve them.

3 Habit 3: Put First Things First
Prioritize and achieve your most important goals instead of constantly reacting to urgencies.

4 Habit 4: Think Win-Win
Collaborate more effectively by building high-trust relationships.

5 Habit 5: Seek First to Understand, Then to Be Understood
Influence others by developing a deep understanding of their needs and perspectives.

6 Habit 6: Synergize
Develop innovative solutions that leverage differences and synergy of key stakeholders.

7 Habit 7: Sharpen the Saw
Increase motivation, energy, and work-life balance by making time for renewing activities.

Self-Care Cookbook for 2025 SAS Institute, 2026 DCMEA Winter Conference, IU1 Wellness Inservice, & PMEA Annual Conference <https://paulfox/care.blog/>

71

© 2026 Paul K. Fox

"Time Management on the Rocks"

Shifting Your Paradigm...

<https://youtu.be/zV3gMTOEWt8>

The key is not to prioritize what's on your schedule, but to schedule your priorities.

To learn more about Stephen Covey's *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*, visit: <https://www.franklincovey.com/the-7-habits/>

Self-Care Cookbook for 2025 SAS Institute, 2026 DCMEA Winter Conference, IU1 Wellness Inservice, & PMEA Annual Conference <https://paulfox/care.blog/>

72

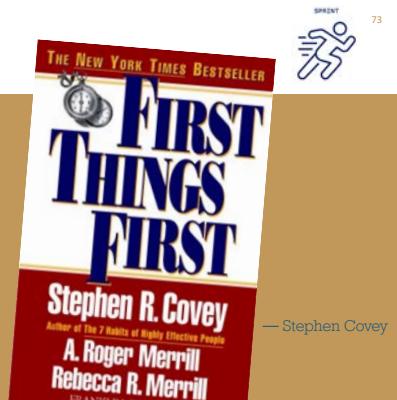
© 2026 Paul K. Fox

"The Big Picture"

Habit #3: First Things First

<https://www.franklincovey.com/the-7-habits/habit-3.html>

"Putting first things first means organizing and executing around your most important priorities. It is living and being driven by the principles you value most, not by the agendas and forces surrounding you."



Self-Care Cookbook for 2025 SAS Institute, 2026 DCMEA Winter Conference, IU1 Wellness Inservice, & PMEA Annual Conference <https://paulfox/care.blog/>

73

© 2026 Paul K. Fox

Priority Management

All about TIME... and the Four D's

- ✓ Do It!
- ✓ Delegate It!
- ✓ Date It!
- ✓ Dump It!

The Four D's of Productivity

Do.

If a task arrives on your plate and is both important and can only be done by you, deal with it immediately.

Delete.

Delete any and all tasks you deem unimportant.

Delegate.

In the event a task pops up that can be or should be handled by one of your team members or colleagues, delegate it.

Delay.

If you're unable to do one of the first three suggestions, set a reminder for yourself to revisit the task at a later time.

<http://www.prioritymanagement.com/>
<https://blog.hubspot.com/sales/4-ds-of-productivity>

Self-Care Cookbook for 2025 SAS Institute, 2026 DCMEA Winter Conference, IU1 Wellness Inservice, & PMEA Annual Conference <https://paulfox/care.blog/>

74

© 2026 Paul K. Fox

Priority Management

PM's "WorkingSmart method" promises to help you "gain control over your day, find balance, prioritize your work, and reach your goals," giving you time to focus on the tasks that are important to you. The bottom line – every digital or printed post-it-note, piece of mail, receipt, publication, email or other communication – must be "put in its place" on the spot – either completed instantly, deferred to another time, given to someone else to do, or THROWN OUT!

All about TIME... and the Four D's

- ✓ Do It!
- ✓ Delegate It!
- ✓ Date It!
- ✓ Dump It!

<http://www.prioritymanagement.com/>
<https://blog.hubspot.com/sales/4-ds-of-productivity>

Self-Care Cookbook for 2025 SAS Institute, 2026 DCMEA Winter Conference, IU1 Wellness Inservice, & PMEA Annual Conference <https://paulfox/care.blog/>

75

© 2026 Paul K. Fox

Priority Management

All about TIME... and the Four D's

- ✓ Do It!
- ✓ Delegate It!
- ✓ Date It!
- ✓ Dump It!

Consider These PM "Hacks"

1. In advance, set-up file folders labeled by months, weeks, and/or days, and one each in-basket, out-basket, and (very important) a PRO-TIME tray.
2. Designate a "PM Period" every day when you go through your in-basket of unsorted (e)mail and delete unnecessary stuff/tasks, date/delay for another time, delegate to others (out-basket), or... DO THEM NOW!
3. As part of your delay file, place journals, catalogs, or other professional readings in a professional read tray (PRO-TIME), but regularly schedule daily/weekly time to do "silent and sustained reading."
4. Allow NO unsorted pieces of paper to ever infiltrate the surface of your desk.

<http://www.prioritymanagement.com/>
<https://blog.hubspot.com/sales/4-ds-of-productivity>

Self-Care Cookbook for 2025 SAS Institute, 2026 DCMEA Winter Conference, IU1 Wellness Inservice, & PMEA Annual Conference <https://paulfox/care.blog/>

76

© 2026 Paul K. Fox



Daily PRO-TIME



77

1. Read an article in a professional journal or digital newsletter.
2. Write your own article or blog post for a professional e-publication.
3. "Keep up your chops" on your instrument or voice. Practice every day!
4. Keep up with your "musicianship training" like ear training, sight-reading, and score reading. Pull out a copy of *Elementary Training for Musicians* by Hindemith and practice exercises that make you sing in syllables, tap a different rhythm independently with your left hand, conduct the beat pattern with your right hand, and beat your foot to the pulse. OR revisit your college solfeggio assignments, and of course, sight-singing or playing-at-sight anything new-to-your-eyes is most beneficial.
5. Take time to compose or arrange your own "Mr. Holland's Opus."



<https://paulfox.blog/2017/12/01/help-how-does-one-keep-up/>

Self-Care Cookbook for 2025 SAS Institute, 2026 DCMEA Winter Conference, IU1 Wellness Inservice, & PMEA Annual Conference <https://paulfox/care.blog/>

77

© 2026 Paul K. Fox



Daily PRO-TIME



78

6. Perform or improvise on the piano or guitar, rotating weekly to different musical styles and forms.
7. Is it time to learn a new instrument? When was the last time you crossed the break on the clarinet, drilled in paradiddles on the snare drum, OR shifted to third position on the violin? Can you play as well as your beginning students?
8. If you're not a piano wizard or an accomplished accompanist, try your hand at sight reading several different voice parts simultaneously from choral octavos. OR can you transpose and play "at-sight" a musical phrase from a full score? (Those French Horn parts always challenged this violist!)



<https://paulfox.blog/2017/12/01/help-how-does-one-keep-up/>

Self-Care Cookbook for 2025 SAS Institute, 2026 DCMEA Winter Conference, IU1 Wellness Inservice, & PMEA Annual Conference <https://paulfox/care.blog/>

78

© 2026 Paul K. Fox

Especially for Music Teachers



79

- Hearing Protection
- Movement Prep for Marching Bands
- Musician Wellness Tips
- Vocal Health
- Other NAfME self-care articles

<https://www.jwpepper.com/wellness>



Self-Care Cookbook for 2025 SAS Institute, 2026 DCMEA Winter Conference, IU1 Wellness Inservice, & PMEA Annual Conference <https://paulfox/care.blog/>

79

© 2026 Paul K. Fox

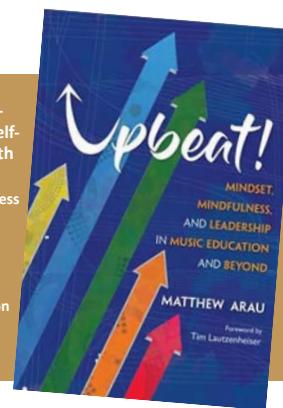
"Upbeat"



80

Divided into three parts — Ignite, Inspire, & Lead — *Upbeat!* takes readers on a journey from internal self-reflection to outward expressions of leadership, with chapters addressing such topics as:

- Self-care for optimal mental, emotional, & physical wellness
- The transformative power of positivity and gratitude
- Growth mindset
- Mindful breathing and listening in an ensemble setting
- Fostering a culture of excellence and connection
- Creating vision & mission statements for your organization
- The essential qualities of an effective leader
- How to develop a thriving student leadership program



— Matthew Arau

Self-Care Cookbook for 2025 SAS Institute, 2026 DCMEA Winter Conference, IU1 Wellness Inservice, & PMEA Annual Conference <https://paulfox/care.blog/>

80

© 2026 Paul K. Fox

“Upbeat”

— Matthew Arau

Self-Care Cookbook for 2025 SAS Institute, 2026 DCMEA Winter Conference, IU1 Wellness Inservice, & PMEA Annual Conference <https://paulfox/care.blog/>

81

© 2026 Paul K. Fox

Books and More Books

Additional resources: <https://paulfox.blog/category/care/> - OR - <https://paulfox.blog/care/>

Self-Care Cookbook for 2025 SAS Institute, 2026 DCMEA Winter Conference, IU1 Wellness Inservice, & PMEA Annual Conference <https://paulfox/care.blog/>

82

© 2026 Paul K. Fox

Admin Help

<https://paulfox.blog/2025/10/05/admins-helping-teachers/>

Self-Care Cookbook 2.0

SAS Institute 2025 Learn. Connect. Activate.

Recipes and Resources for School Leaders

Paul K. Fox, PMEA Council for Teacher Training, Recruitment, & Retention
Monday, December 8, 2025: 11:00 AM - 12:05 PM
Empire B - Hershey Lodge & Convention Center

83

© 2026 Paul K. Fox

CODA: Motivating Beliefs

Share with your neighbor...

1. Something new you learned today.
2. One “personal prescription” for improving your own health & wellness.

Self-Care Cookbook for 2025 SAS Institute, 2026 DCMEA Winter Conference, IU1 Wellness Inservice, & PMEA Annual Conference <https://paulfox/care.blog/>

84

© 2026 Paul K. Fox

85

CODA: Motivating Beliefs



- ✓ I am worthy of better and change is possible for me right now.
- ✓ I set my own expectations in life and in teaching.
- ✓ I know what is important and allocate time accordingly.
- ✓ I ensure my needs are met to prevent overwhelm and exhaustion.

— Angela Watson

Self-Care Cookbook for 2025 SAS Institute, 2026 DCMEA Winter Conference, IU1 Wellness Inservice, & PMEA Annual Conference <https://paulfox/care.blog/>

85

© 2026 Paul K. Fox

86

Contact Information

Paul K. Fox
paulfox.usc@gmail.com
<https://paulfox/care.blog/>



86