

-- Speaker 1 00:00:27 Hi everyone. Welcome to Dr. MC's Self-Care Cabaret podcast. I'm Theresa Melito-Conners, a doctoral level educational administrator and mental health practitioner focused on helping you our world's helpers. Every day we have a choice to prioritize our well-being, to incorporate reflection, recovery, renewal, and resilience strategies into our lives. However, those of us who step up and serve our communities in healthcare, education, nonprofit spaces and more can struggle with putting ourselves first. I've seen this firsthand. It's a challenge. Enter Dr. MCs Self-care cabaret podcast. Here we have real intimate conversations with leading experts, passionate about accessible, sustainable self-care in its 10 domains. It's all about the hard work we can take on together to find our spotlight. And today is a very special episode with my mom, Anna Maria Milito. Anna Maria is a retired veteran educator of 32 years. She retired two years ago from teaching high school visual arts in the greater Boston area.

Speaker 1 00:01:41 She continues to be an incredibly passionate educator. Believe it or not, she is still in contact with many students years after they leave the classroom. She is the epitome of relationship building and reaching students, usually those that are the toughest to reach. She has also overcome some tremendous obstacles growing up in poverty as the oldest of four, only to find herself in an abusive marriage, determined to better her life. She returned to school to earn her undergraduate degree. At 39 years old, she was able to safely escape the marriage. And today she has a master's of education plus enough credits. She could have a second master's. She did all of this while never missing a beat to be there for her only daughter. Me. She is my rock. My inspiration and the reason why I am a strong, fierce woman today, now in retirement, she's living her best life. Fun fact. My doctor mc artwork, you know, the little doc emoji and the one bursting out of the star. My mom designed those. Aren't they cute? And she helps me a lot with the work of the self-care cabaret. And without further delay, here she is. Welcome Mom. <laugh>. Wow, that is a lot to live up to. That is a lot to live up to, but you do it. So we're excited to have you on today as part of a special Mother's Day episode as we are approaching that holiday.

Speaker 2 00:03:02 Well, thank you. I'm happy to be here.

Speaker 1 00:03:04 And I feel like you have a lot to share, not only for teachers, but I should tell you, especially for teachers and educators, as you did 32 years in education, right? Yeah, I

Speaker 2 00:03:13 Certainly did.

Speaker 1 00:03:14 So I like to ask all my guests, and I know you listened to many of my episodes, so you're probably familiar with this, but how do you like to practice self-care?

Speaker 2 00:03:24 Well, um, now that I'm retired, I practice self-care by trying to pay attention to my body. Um, when I need a nap, I take a nap. Sometimes I ignore it a little bit, but then I'll pay for it later.

Speaker 1 00:03:36 Mm. We don't like to ignore it. Our body. No.

Speaker 2 00:03:39 And um, I've also, uh, recently we moved recently, uh, within the past, um, I don't know, eight months or so. So I, um, was busy with all of that. That's, uh, I don't recommend moving <laugh>, but anyway, um,

Speaker 1 00:03:53 That work in that environmental domain. Yeah,

Speaker 2 00:03:55 It was, it's wonderful. But it was a lot of work to get there and are settled, I should say. And uh, so now I started walking and using my stationary bike and things like that because I believe that without moving, it's um, it's the kiss of death. You're asking for trouble. So you need to keep going, especially as you get older. Yeah,

Speaker 1 00:04:15 For sure. So you mentioned a couple of important things, the importance of rest and movement and your space being set up in a way that is conducive to you. I know you're really good without, with not letting things get cluttered and disorganized. You're very organized, which is very helpful. So can you talk a little bit about your journey to self-care? Because this is some, I mean, I learned a lot from you. So what kind of, what did that look like?

Speaker 2 00:04:42 Well, um, I started following different, um, people that are famous in that field. Um, more, uh, I don't know what you ca --

-- ll them globally. Noted. I don't know. But anyway, one night

Speaker 1 00:04:55 Experts, other experts. Other

Speaker 2 00:04:56 Experts, yes. One night I found a book by Cheryl Richardson, who's a Newbury port, um, resident. And, um, she's, her book was The Art of Extreme Self-Care. And that kind of started, I heard her speak. That kind of started really my journey of paying more attention because, um, teaching is a, uh, I would say that it's a soul sucking, um, <laugh>. It's a soul sucking, it

Speaker 1 00:05:24 Can be experience, it can be.

Speaker 2 00:05:26 And um, you really have to have boundaries and um, you really have to pay attention to what's going on. And um, I made a few notes and I kind of chuckled as I was doing this because one of the things that

Speaker 1 00:05:40 Notes to prepare for this, for this,

Speaker 2 00:05:41 Oh yes, in my classroom is I was always painfully organized. You know, you never open the closet and just shove the stuff in there hoping that you'll deal with it later.

Because later in teaching doesn't ever come

Speaker 1 00:05:54 <laugh>. Oh, when you have time. That's one of the biggest, biggest lies in education. Yeah.

Speaker 2 00:05:58 It doesn't actually happen. So I was really good at organizing and keeping, you know, I would keep things very methodical in, uh, putting the stuff away and things like that. So, um, and I still do that in my home because if you don't put things back, you're not gonna find them when you need them again. And actually moving adds a whole other dimension of crazy because it's like, oh, I know I moved that, but I originally thought it should go here. So it's, it's difficult, um, to stay organized, but it's definitely worthwhile to put in that extra effort in the beginning before you end up with piles of stuff. Mm-hmm.

Speaker 1 00:06:36 <affirmative>. So I've heard you, I wanna go back to Cheryl Richardson for just a second because I remember, do you remember the year you saw her speak? You first heard her speak?

Speaker 2 00:06:45 That would've been, um, she had just released the Art of Extreme Self-Care. So I'm gonna go with 2009, 2008, something like that. Okay.

Speaker 1 00:06:57 Yeah, that sounds about right, because I remember you actually saying that that book changed your life. Oh yeah. So you think that that just like how so?

Speaker 2 00:07:07 Well, one of the things she talked about, because I tend to be a people pleaser, and I think most teachers are, you know, you're constantly asked, it's almost like Ma ma ma or <laugh>,

Speaker 1 00:07:17 I never did that. No, not you.

Speaker 2 00:07:19 I'm saying these students and stuff like that, they're constantly at

Speaker 1 00:07:23 You. Yeah.

Speaker 2 00:07:24 And um, one of the things that Cheryl talked about when I heard her speak was, um, and hopefully this is not inappropriate, but you need to piss somebody off every day for 30 days. And when you do that, the more you advocate for yourself and defend yourself or put up your boundaries and things like that, the easier it becomes. Does it become easier? Hmm. Kind to be on? I think it's situational. It depends on the situation, what you're dealing with, who you're dealing with.

Speaker 1 00:07:54 So setting those boundaries.

Speaker 2 00:07:55 Yes. And with kids, with students, I did all kinds of things, wild things in the classroom. Like one time, um, I had advanced art students, which was a gift. But you would think that teaching kids at that level is so easy, but it's not because they're, they're needy just like all kids. So what I did was I cut these little numbers out of, um, a cardboard, you know, cardstock. And they used have to take a number because I couldn't

Speaker 1 00:08:22 <laugh> like at the deli. Yeah.

Speaker 2 00:08:24 I couldn't help them all. And you

Speaker 1 00:08:26 Know, I don't remember that

Speaker 2 00:08:27 When you are, well that was probably a time when you worked, you were working not in elsewhere education. Yes. And so, well, you're working in education,

Speaker 1 00:08:36 But not at the same school

Speaker 2 00:08:38 And which was a gift by the way. But anyway, um, and the kids, it really worked because, you know, they all want a piece of you. And then to have them all stand in line, 20 kids deep when you got 30 of them --

-- in the classroom, that's not, that's wasting time. Right. So they would have to, they knew that they had to take the number and then, and then of course there was too many numbers. So then we had to make a list <laugh> from the, it just, you know, everything. And you figure it out though, as you go along. I mean, you kind of try something. I had a veteran teacher that had taught for many, many years and she said, you know, every year you reinvent and every year you get a little bit better. And of course, I, I do believe that that's true. So, um, you really have to, in education especially, and I'm sure there's other fields, I'm sure healthcare and other helping professions are just the same. But you really have to be an abstract thinker and think to yourself, how am I gonna fix this?

Speaker 1 00:09:34 Hmm.

Speaker 2 00:09:35 So

Speaker 1 00:09:36 Yeah. And focusing on like what those things are. Cuz we can't fix everything. There's problems we can't fix. Well, right, right at this moment. But really being able to kind of take it down to like, what is, what can I control? What can I fix Exactly. In this moment. Yeah. And I know as folks might not know that my mom and I worked in the same school for four years and then another that I left and went and got other experiences outside of my home community and then, uh, came back <laugh>. Right. So for many of the, of those 20 years, I was also in the same building. So I got to kind of see firsthand, um, how you were in the classroom. Right. Which was such a gift and an honor to watch.

Speaker 2 00:10:16 Well, and the kids actually got a boot out of it too, because for real

Speaker 1 00:10:20 They really

Speaker 2 00:10:20 Thought, they really wanna get to know you as a human. And that's the other thing, like little kids, I, I think that they are the same in that regard. They want to know who you are. Like they see you at the grocery store and it's like, wow, you, you eat.

Speaker 1 00:10:34 Yeah. You leave the school buy groceries, like

Speaker 2 00:10:37 Well and things like that. And in high school, which I taught high school, I worked elementary for the first 12 and then the next 20 was in high school it's even more so.

So they wanna see that human side. Yeah. And I always felt like, you know, show your vulnerability to get back to Cheryll Richardson. Um, she, her thing about boundaries and, you know, upsetting somebody every day for 30 days. I mean you do sometimes and administration doesn't necessarily like that, but you have to pro well you have to protect yourself. Right.

Because if you don't, there's nobody that's gonna come in. And when you first get the job, you know, they'll tell you anything. Especially dependent on how desperate they are to fill the position. They'll tell you anything to get you to take the job. But at the end of the day, it's you and the kids. Right.

Speaker 1 00:11:26 And you're not a, an unlimited resource. No. You ha <laugh>, you need to recharge and refuel. You just can't keep giving and giving and giving and there'll be nothing left. Right.

Speaker 2 00:11:36 I actually used to hide at the end of the day <laugh>. So at the end of my career, um, maybe for the last, I don't, I don't know how many years, but I would shut the lights and um, shut the door and my door was locked. I always locked my door because, you know, there were things that could get broken or taken or what have you. But um, and I did a lot for kids. Believe me, I loved my students. I was always there for them. But sometimes you just really, I need to regroup at three o'clock in the afternoon, three 30. I need to like shut my brain off and regroup. Whether that means taking a nap like I did when I was at Salem State and doing my master's degree. I used to bring my dinner up there. I would recline the seat in my car and then um, go to sleep and then wake up and have dinner and then sit in a class for four hours.

Speaker 2 00:12:25 And you can't, unless you rest, you are not going to get through it. And the one thing about that's really, I always, and I would warn my students if I was tired, I'd tell them, listen, today's not the day <laugh>. Like, you really need to step it up today cuz I'm really tired. And of course I could do that in high school. I'm sure with littles you really can't quite do that. But you know, my students knew and respected me enough that they would kind of behav

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-- e for the day. Right. Cause it didn't the second day I needed to be on my game. Right. But in any case, that's, yeah, that was that.

Speaker 1 00:13:00 But I think that goes back to you. You said so many things. I just wanna make sure our listeners are following along. So that goes back to creating those strong relationships. You were really skilled at creating strong, trusting relationships.

Speaker 2 00:13:16 Thank you.

Speaker 1 00:13:18 What are some tips to do that? Like how did you do that?

Speaker 2 00:13:22 Well, you don't put yourself up on a pedestal. You have to. And you know, I taught art that was very difficult and artists have very sensitive egos. So I never, I used to do paintings along with my kids so that they could see me struggle. I don't think I ever put myself way up high and them down below I would make it so like, well I don't know. Let's check this out. Let's, let's learn about this. I'm not exactly sure. Let's figure this out together. Oh, what do you think about this?

Speaker 1 00:13:51 I love when you would, you would also do your art with the students. Yes. So they could see your struggles. Right. With a piece and see you and then help you problem solve and do that. I always thought that was really cool. And I think you said it earlier when you said let them see you be human. Right. And not on a pedestal that in being able to relate to kids.

Speaker 2 00:14:17 Right. I had a student one time, this is actually kind of funny. She was cute as a button. Um, and you know, I don't wanna mention any names certainly. But she came into my classroom and I had done a self-portrait that I thought was actually coming out pretty good. It was, it was cooking right along. And she said to me, um, Ms. Milito, your nose doesn't look like that <laugh>.

Speaker 2 00:14:38 That took a lot of courage. Yeah. And trust. And if she didn't trust me, you know, if she thought I was gonna get upset or angry, I have to say I was a little, I twitched a little. But then I said to her, well what do you mean Show me what you mean. And you know what, she was correct. Because one thing, you know, teachers, we are experts obviously, but there's a lot of little brains there and they're not, they, they can contribute just as much. I mean it's, you know, I think that they can and they like to be heard. Right. And they like to understand that you celebrate what they bring to the table also.

Speaker 1 00:15:16 Well, it's funny cuz as education has evolved, giving students, having students have that voice and choice in their work is definitely like something that has come along. You were doing that before was trendy. <laugh> I was

Speaker 2 00:15:29 Doing

Speaker 1 00:15:29 Before it was trendy. And you always say social emotional learning. She was doing that before it was trendy too. <laugh>. Well,

Speaker 2 00:15:34 And the former superintendent actually, um, you know, recognized that, which is kind of nice. And um, yeah, I've always been able to, sometimes I got in a little bit of hot water for it, but I was able to defend it and, you know, and I always,

Speaker 1 00:15:49 By being honest and vulnerable.

Speaker 2 00:15:51 Well, yeah. I mean just saying, well this is how I do it and this and I could say this is, this is working for the kids. Like, look at the art.

Speaker 1 00:16:00 Right. Look at the art. The art was tremendous.

Speaker 2 00:16:02 It was pretty tremendous. And I had kids, I, um, uh, my, my Larry's uncle one time asked me if I had kids, if I ever saw any real talent, I had kids that could draw better than I could.

Speaker 1 00:16:13 Yeah. Larry's her significant other. Right. Folks don't necessarily know who Larry is. Oh, that's true. <laugh>, sorry.

Speaker 2 00:16:17 Well, it's, um, yeah, it's uh, uh, there's a lot of ability out there. And just because somebody's younger, um, you know, you have to give them, you have to give them a little, a little bit of platform. Like a, a little, you know, a little something something. Yeah. So that they can, they'll

Speaker 1 00:16:34 Rise and they can grow as learners and humans, which is what we're trying to create. Right. Yeah. What is it, um, you know, fully functioning like successful citizens. Like that's, so we're ideally, uh, creating in school. So you mentioned a couple of things and I think one of the, I don't even know i --

-- f you realize this, but you were really good with self-care practices kind of throughout the day. And I know so many educators struggle with this. I mean, we know the burnout rates are through the roof. The people are fleeing the field of education. They're not coming into the field. Like we're in, we're in crisis. And it's difficult for people to kind of conceptualize what self-care might look like in such a chaotic environment as as teaching in a, in a school. So I know there were some that you used to do. I, you've touched upon a couple, but I wanna make sure that you share those. So what were some of the self-care practices you did throughout the school day?  
Um,

Speaker 2 00:17:28 Well at the end of the day, I don't think I said this just yet, but also after I got the master's degree, I, um, I would hide from my students at the end of the day.

Speaker 1 00:17:39 <laugh>. So is this like during a prep block? Like when

Speaker 2 00:17:41 Well, yes, it could be during a prep cuz sometimes kids like to wander.

Speaker 1 00:17:45 You obviously didn't have a class you were like hiding from

Speaker 2 00:17:48 No, no, no. But I would hide at the end of the day and sometimes during a prep I would shut the door and shut the lights. And so they didn't, of course I was fortunate enough that I had windows, so I wasn't sitting in total darkness. But, um, because if not then, you know, a student that might, I don't know, take a long trip to the bathroom and of course this is for high school. Um, they would just come down and wanna shoot the breeze. Right. And, you know, I had a lot of work to do. I am really good at, um, organizing my time to be as efficient as possible because at the end of the day I was toast. Hmm. Like when I had an afterschool

Speaker 1 00:18:24 Meeting. Yeah. She was <laugh>.

Speaker 2 00:18:26 Well, when I had an afterschool meeting, it was torture. Yeah. To sit there. And I hate to admit this, but sometimes I couldn't listen to what they were actually talking about because all I was thinking about was getting out of there. Right. And you know, sometimes I'd have to ask somebody later. A lot of times I'd have to ask somebody later like, okay, so I made sure that I was

Speaker 1 00:18:46 Doing what I was Right. What I missed to do <laugh>.

Speaker 2 00:18:49 But, and, and the kids, you know, they did kind of catch on, but you know, some kids, there's nobody home after school and stuff, so they'd much rather hang out with you. Right. And that's wonderful. But

Speaker 1 00:18:59 There's a time and a place and I

Speaker 2 00:19:00 Couldn't do it and be successful and do what I needed to do because as you know, in education there's more and more paperwork all the time. Mm-hmm. <affirmative> and you know, report cards came and, and in my district we did, um, what are those other things? The progress reports. Oh yeah. So it wasn't just four times a year, it was eight.

Speaker 1 00:19:20 Well, and I think it's important, like you're, what you're talking about is a physical boundary, shutting the lights, dimming the lights, closing the door. You didn't do that every single day. No. There were plenty of times You had o other conversations with students and certainly, you know, continue to build those relationships you had to have, you wouldn't have had the successful relationships that you had in the classroom. But also being able to set those other boundaries I think is really important. What are some other things that you used to do? Oh, and you've mentioned the nap. I just wanna say this, I just wanna clarify. The nap thing is very real. When I would come home from work, I knew not to talk to my mother until at least like three o'clock. Right. Like she needed to get home, have her like 20 minute nap, half hour. And then I could just like don't talk to her. Even my husband, he's now my husband. But back when we were dating, he even knew if he was over the house, gotta leave, gotta live, leave my mom alone for a little bit. Just to get that refuel, that recharge. Well right.

Speaker 1 00:20:17 Did you hear the news about our exciting new offering from the self-care cabaret? We're calling it talkback. If you're familiar with the theater space, you may have participated in a talkback before. After a performance, the cast and crew will come back on stage to chat with the audience and answer questions. Think of it a --

-- s a casual guided discussion. Inspired by this and by popular interest, we've come up with a talkback for the self-care cabaret podcast groups will listen to a podcast episode or two of their choosing. Then I'll come and lead your discussion either in person or virtually of those episodes, expanding on the big ideas. It's a great option for groups looking for short, impactful professional development or smaller teams looking to get an introduction to self-care and wellbeing. We have done a few of these so far and let me say they have been so much fun. So if you're interested in bringing a talk back to your group or organization, email, podcast, dr mc self-care dot com and now on with the show.

Speaker 2 00:21:22 So the recharge, that's very important. And I could actually go to things at night and be perfectly fine. But when, as I said, when I had to go to meetings after school, oh man. I would think to myself, and you know, you can do lion's breath and you can deep breath and you can do all the things. But at the end of the day, for a short time during my teaching career, I belonged to a gym. And I have to be honest that on more than one occasion I felt myself nodding off on my way home trying to get back home from this gym to um, because I would zip right up there right after school.

Speaker 1 00:21:56 I don't love hearing that it

Speaker 2 00:21:57 Was torture <laugh>. Well, I mean you're trying to do, you know, all the things that you're supposed to be doing. Right. And it's not, it's not always. It's, it's a difficult job. And, and kids, I was on from the minute mm-hmm. <affirmative>, I stepped in the door of the school, which at that point was about 7:30 AM

Speaker 1 00:22:16 Oh yeah. It's a later start now, right?

Speaker 2 00:22:17 Yes. It is a later start. And um, I was on until I closed my door and stepped out outside of the building. And even on more than one occasion, I had people chase me out the door cuz they had

Speaker 1 00:22:30 To see me

Speaker 2 00:22:31 In the parking lot. And

Speaker 1 00:22:33 But if you don't set those boundaries, this is why I think teachers sometimes get into a, a dangerous pattern that's hard to break. It's very hard where they're taking work home, they're doing things on the weekends, they're working during school vacations. You can't do that. You're gonna burn out eventually. Maybe not right away. It might take a bit, but eventually that will eat away at you. That'll eat away at your most precious relationships because you're not gonna be taking care of your family and your loved ones. You're not going to be able to do all that. I had somebody say to me one point, it was really kind of stuck with me talking about education, saying that the job will take as much as you're willing to give it. Yes.

Speaker 2 00:23:15 That's actually a very true statement.

Speaker 1 00:23:17 It is. So if you are willing to give it your all and then some it will keep taking it. Yeah. So you and you have to kind of be self-sufficient in that or self-aware to know to set those boundaries. So I think you had some really good ones. I love the afterschool nap, the closing the door and kind of, I mean that has, I have to do that in my job. I just, sometimes if the door's open, you know, teachers wanna come in, talk to me, kids will wanna come in, talk to me, the the secretary. The principal. And so I have to shut the door and then they know, oh, leave her lunch. Must be in a meeting. Even if I don't have a meeting, uhoh, maybe I shouldn't reveal that secret. But not just yet. <laugh> sometimes I don't have a meeting. I just need quiet to get my stuff done. Well,

Speaker 2 00:23:59 Right. I mean, how do you get, you know, and, and this time of year actually in my district is the art show. And so I got a couple of messages from people about that and oh, you know, we set up and I used to, I love to celebrate my students. So I hung hundreds of pieces of art. And let me tell you, you really, you have to be, you have to be the pseudo parent. You have to be creative, you have to be the teacher, you have to take care of yourself. There's a lot that goes into it. And you know, sometimes, um, people that teach the younger students think that high school is much easier. I've worked in both and I can tell you honestly it isn't <laugh>. The problems are a lot bigger. There's a lot when they tell you where to go, it's not quit --

-- e as cute <laugh> as they

Speaker 1 00:24:47 In kindergarten. It's not cute when they're little either. But I see what you's saying. No, it's kinda

Speaker 2 00:24:51 Funny. But, you know, and so you, it's just very different. Teaching is just, it's an exhausting, it's the most wonderful career and being a helping professional, professional, excuse me, in general. But it is definitely, it will suck the life outta you and saying that it will take as much as you are willing to give. Absolutely. Yeah. And you know, in theory when you're in college, they tell you all these things and all these um, all these theories and all this stuff. And you're gonna do this and you're gonna do that. And I remember one professor, and I know that you know who he was. Uhoh people don't necessarily know this, but I used to drag you along to some of the classes. Oh my God. And he said, do not think you're gonna stand in front of a group of kids and you are gonna own them. That's not how it works. Yeah. In high school, they're a lot smarter than the littles <laugh>. I always prided myself that I knew what the littles were gonna do. <laugh> High School, you never know what they're gonna do next from TikTok to making fake profiles on on, um,

Speaker 1 00:25:51 Oh, catfishing on dating websites. Dating

Speaker 2 00:25:53 Websites. Nice.

Speaker 1 00:25:54 That's so cute. Yeah.

Speaker 2 00:25:56 <laugh>. One other thing that I did, um,

Speaker 1 00:25:58 Well wait, hold on. I wanted to, to explain that because that is actually kind of cool. So when my mom went back to school at 39, um, I didn't always wanna be, I was always dancing or doing rehearsal or theater, whatever, but sometimes I didn't have something going on after school. And my mom was going to classes. I wanted to go with her because it was way cooler hanging out with my mom than staying home with my father. So I would go to Salem State. So as, as what a sophomore in high school, I was hanging out on the college campus and I've actually talked about this on some Salem State events I've done. But, um, it was such great exposure for me as a high school student, 16 years old, I thought I was the coolest being on the Salem State campus. And some teachers really welcomed me into their classroom.

Speaker 1 00:26:44 Some of them were like a little less, um, enthused, but it was still cool. And I could still like be out in like the common areas or whatever. But some of the ones that actually was like, well let's learn about the American High School by having a real live American high school student Yeah. In the class. And it was su it was such a great experience for me. It was kind of an unofficial dual enrollment really. Cuz it showed me what college life was like while still, you know, being a high school student. And I did do my master's at Salem State. They were a phenomenal program for sure. Anyway, sorry, I just wanted to explain. No,

Speaker 2 00:27:14 That's actually, uh, oh well you were gonna talk about catfishing too, what that was Oh

Speaker 1 00:27:18 Well the catfish. Yeah. Well, didn't weren't students at one point making pro fake profiles to try and troll teachers that they found were on dating websites. Yeah, I'm sure that was a long time ago. I'm sure it still happens. So it's probably even worse now.

Speaker 2 00:27:31 I don't know. But

Speaker 1 00:27:32 Anyway. Well, I wanna go back to boundaries. Okay. Because you, I think, so we talked about the naps, we talked about, um, closing the door, we talked, I think you did some other ones. Weren't there a couple of other ones too? Ooh, movement throughout the day?

Speaker 2 00:27:46 Oh yes, I would try. And I actually did buy a, um, a tracker, uh, in my later years, probably, I don't know, 5, 6, 7 years ago, however long ago that was the first, um, tracker that I bought because I felt my body was kind of stiffening up and I really didn't like that. And even though I would exercise, it's still, you still have to move. And so well

Speaker 1 00:28:10 Sitting for long periods of time is no good.

Speaker 2 00:28:12 They say, didn't you say they say that's a new smoking or something?

Speaker 1 00:28:15 I've heard somebody said that to me. The sitting is the new smoking. Well, so ableist, but I making a point

Speaker 2 00:28:21 To get up and at least at one point I can remember, um, students sayin

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-- g to me, what are you doing? Because it was almost like I was doing laps around my classroom, just, you know, just checking to see what they were doing and things like that because you have to move. And I sat on a stool which wasn't very comfortable. Um, I didn't really, sometimes I did bring my chair up, but what that did, because my chair had wheels, then you kind of find yourself slipping back into old habits. Mm-hmm. You definitely, like, I'd roll over to another kid, maybe down the, you know, down the classroom in the other end of the classroom or whatever. And I thought, oh no, this

Speaker 1 00:28:59 Isn't good. But the stool was positioned clo like in the mix of the students. Yes. So you were with them like in working in small groups or in pairs or whatnot, so you could really assess the work and see what was going on. Right. And you did have the benefit of a very large classroom.

Speaker 2 00:29:14 I had a spectacular

Speaker 1 00:29:16 <laugh>. I really did. So doing, getting up though and moving, even if you don't have a large classroom, getting up and moving around your building, even if it's only, you know, the couple minutes between classes, it makes a big difference. Or if you are able to get outside for a couple of minutes and just, even if it's five minutes <laugh>.

Speaker 2 00:29:33 Well even, even just to like get up and sometimes I have the music on, um, I had a smart board and I would put music on and sometimes I'd get up and dance and of course the kids were like, oh gosh, there she

Speaker 1 00:29:45 Goes, <laugh>, five minute dance parties. She's

Speaker 2 00:29:47 Losing it. But you have to move. I mean, unless by some, you know, unfortunate thing you can't, it is very important to move your body and to get, you know, um, I feel like during the day doing it is better because again, later in the day, even now I'm tired, three or four o'clock I'm wiped out for me to stop moving and doing, going for a walk. Some people like to go for an evening stroll. That's not my jam.

Speaker 1 00:30:16 Well I find it's hard, like when I go, when I get home after work to then wanna change into exercise clothes, maybe eat dinner, say spend some time with my husband to then go back out to another, like, to go drive to a class or go to the gym or do something else like that just feels like it takes too much time. That's why I wanna start doing some joyful movement pop-up dance parties Right. In that like kind of after school three to five window we're gonna, we're gonna work on that. Yeah.

Speaker 2 00:30:44 Well they could be recorded too for people to watch a little.

Speaker 1 00:30:46 Absolutely. Absolutely. Yeah.

Speaker 2 00:30:47 Well that reminds me, dinner reminds me, I never went without lunch. God forbid I don't like to miss a meal. <laugh>.

Speaker 1 00:30:55 Um, you shouldn't miss meals <laugh>.

Speaker 2 00:30:57 Well, and it was really important for me because again, if I wasn't the best that I could be in my classroom, you know, your patience get short. And I used to do that by, um, I would prep on the weekends and um, if you use glass containers, a salad will stay. Mm-hmm. <affirmative>, I would put glass containers and little containers

Speaker 1 00:31:19 Inside the glass container. Like a Did you use like a mason jar? Like what?

Speaker 2 00:31:21 Sometimes I did mason jars, mostly the Pyrex with the, uh, the plastic lids. They

Speaker 1 00:31:26 For salads that would stay For

Speaker 2 00:31:27 Salads Yeah. Or soup or something like that because um, I did have a microwave either in my classroom or close by. Because you don't get much time.

Speaker 1 00:31:37 No, you don't.

Speaker 2 00:31:37 For lunch, I can remember the, uh, the union president one time saying that we get 19 minutes and the principal corrected her and said it was actually 22.

Speaker 1 00:31:46 Well, let's not <laugh>. Wow. Let's not be wasteful of our time years ago. My god. Meanwhile it takes 20 minutes to tell your, for your stomach, to tell your brain that you're full. No, no. So choking down food isn't ideal for anybody, but here we are.

Speaker 2 00:31:58 But that's, that's the way it goes. And if, you know, if you had a duty or whatever you had to do, um, just really, it's a really, you have to be creative because as much as they say that they will come and hel --



-- p you, nobody does. And it's your own self that you're, um, going to take care of. You're, you are going to suffer. And Cheryl Richardson was probably the first person, or I would have to say was the first person that really talked Turkey about, you know, life and how you can, um, work things in and it's okay to upset somebody. It doesn't feel good, it doesn't feel good to make somebody upset. It feels much nicer to, you know, to do whatever they want. But then you're standing there ready to keel over. So Yeah. You know. Yeah, it was definitely, it was not a, um, I'm glad that I did it. I'm very grateful that I was able, I had that privilege of working with kids and stuff. But as it got, as I got older and it got, um, you know, COVID definitely changed the world. Um, so I'm glad that I am retired <laugh>. I'm very grateful. Thank

Speaker 1 00:33:11 You. And I think, you know, you've, you've given us so much to think about in terms of just maybe how to get more creative or maybe some things you can invite into your day that you really hadn't thought of. And you also mentioned, you know, nobody's coming to save you. Well we know that there are like systemic issues and larger policy issues that need to change in education. Yes, they do. However, for right now, today, I think a big takeaway is you have to start with yourself and self-care always comes first. Self-care is other care. Right? When you make these shifts, you're better able to help others. Right. Any last kind of words of wisdom or advice for maybe teachers Avoiding burnout.

Speaker 2 00:33:53 Enjoy the ride. Because if you, again, if you sit there and think and wait and people will promise you all kinds of things. Not, they're not trying to be, you know, foolish about it, it's just they're getting their soul sucked also. So, um, enjoy the ride. And sometimes if you, you know, if you need to kick back a little bit and maybe not be such, um, a go-getter, um, on a specific day, do it. Yeah. Sit and talk to kids. Actually sitting and talking to kids is a blast. <laugh>, I don't care how,

Speaker 1 00:34:29 But you have to be in tune enough with yourself to know like, I'm doing too much right now. Right. It's okay to take a beat and yet, and it's okay. You are correct. Talking to kids at all ages is a lot of fun.

Speaker 2 00:34:40 Yeah. It's, it's a lot of fun And just, you know, come down off their pedestal cuz I know cuz I listen to my students talk and some teachers, they take themselves very serious and it is a serious profession, don't get me wrong. It is a very serious profession, but at the end of the day, you know, it's okay to be human.

Speaker 1 00:34:59 Yeah, absolutely. I think that's a great takeaway and so many thoughts for like different boundaries and stuff. Thank you so much for sharing all those. I hope folks found it interesting. We'll make sure there's some, um, resources in the episode guide. My mom's not super active on social media, although we might get her, you may see her on my social media pages from time to time. I

Speaker 2 00:35:21 Used to put all kinds of stuff on Twitter, but

Speaker 1 00:35:24 Yeah. You know, we don't really use that. That's all right.

Speaker 2 00:35:26 My Facebooking, I know that's kind of 19 whatever <laugh> 2000. Nobody does Facebook

Speaker 1 00:35:31 Anymore. A lot of people do Facebook still. My goodness. But, um, anyway, to confuse people. That was great. Thank you so much for those tips and again, I hope folks found that interesting. Thank you so much for listening. I hope you feel more energized and empowered. And if you liked what you heard here today, subscribe and leave a review for this podcast on your preferred player. Follow along on Facebook and Instagram at Dr. Mc Self-Care and Dr. MCs Self-Care Cabaret on LinkedIn. You could also visit my website, dr mc self-care dot com for the latest updates and to sign up for my cast party eNewsletter. And if you're interested in ever having me present to an audience near you, email info, Dr. Mc self-care. Thanks again. Stay well and do good. And for the moms out there, happy Mother's Day.

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