

Superintendent Update: October 18<sup>th</sup>, 2018

Quote for the week: “Never be bullied into silence. Never allow yourself to be made a victim. Accept no one’s definition of your life; define yourself.”—Harvey Fierstein

I copied the article below because I think it fits well with our quote. I understand that I am not perfect and I understand that you are not perfect...but I see the good in the work we do and I do not want us to beat ourselves up and certainly I don’t want us to beat others up (figuratively speaking) for the “un-perfectness” or flaws we come with. Your identity and my identity has many unique characteristics, but we all can claim the identity of loving children/students! Let’s celebrate our identity because we make a difference! This goes for every employee in our district. Each person is unique and has special purpose each day. Let’s use that purpose to make our little corner of the world the best it can be!

Everyone struggles to figure out who people truly are. Often when they define themselves they focus on the negative or how they compare to other people. Nobody but you can define who you are but this article has some tips on how to look at the ways you define yourself and how to make it positive.

## Part 1

### Discovering Your Identity

# 1

**Know yourself.** Self-knowledge, particularly non-judgemental self knowledge, is an incredibly important skill to help you define yourself. You'll need to understand what makes you tick and what your thought processes are before you can define who you are as a person.<sup>[1]</sup>

- Mindfulness means paying attention to what you are thinking and observing your patterns of thought. For instance, you might realize that you have a tendency to feel that people don't care what you think and that your opinions are unimportant. Recognizing that you have these thoughts and catching them before they start causing you anxiety, can help you piece together the important parts of your identity.<sup>[2]</sup>
- When you start paying attention to your thought processes and patterns you'll need to practice attentive non-judgment. This means being aware of your thought patterns and acknowledging them, but not beating yourself up over them. Everyone has negative thought patterns and processes. By paying attention to them, you can eliminate them from your mind.

## 2

**Notice how you identify yourself.** Once you start paying attention to the way you think about yourself and about the world, look specifically for the ways in which you identify yourself. See what groups and communities you use to create your identity. All of these inform how you see yourself and tell you what you are letting define you.<sup>[3]</sup>

- For example, look at things like religion, nationality, hobbies and see if those are ways you define yourself.
- Look at the roles you take on, such as your job, your position in your family (mother, father, sister, brother), your romantic status (single, couple, etc.).

## 3

**Jot down thought processes and self definitions.** To become adept at seeing your thought processes and definitions and how those determine how you act and who you are, write them down in a notebook as you identify them. You'll be able to see how you consider yourself and it will make it easier to eliminate the negative associations.

### Part 2

## Creating Your Self-Definition

### 1

**Record your negative definitions.** Recording them and paying attention to them will help you let go of them. Getting them out in the open can help to take away some of their hold on your mind and self.<sup>[4]</sup>

- Don't limit yourself in negative ways. Definition of the self determines the action. So, for instance, if you're defining yourself as someone who has bad relationships, you've already lost the potential for a good relationship. It is a story that you tell yourself, and then because you believe the story, you will already be behaving in ways that make the story true.

## 2

**Identify your core values.** You don't want to define yourself based on outside forces, because outside forces are volatile and subject to constant change. By basing your self-definition on core values, you will have a better chance of having a stable self-definition.<sup>[6]</sup>

- You won't lose your self identity if you base it on values you hold at your core, like compassion, courage, integrity.
- Write down a list of these values and consciously and mindfully act them out in your daily life. Therefore, if courage is one of your core values, stand up for someone being harassed at the bus stop, or if honesty is a core value, fess up to having lost your father's favorite watch. If compassion is on that list, spend time volunteering at a homeless shelter.

## 3

**Define yourself in positive ways.** This doesn't mean that you don't acknowledge the negative events and actions that have happened in your life. They are as much a part of you as the positive, but they do not define you.<sup>[6]</sup>

- This means don't let outside circumstances rule your identity. That comes from within in, from the core values that you have already identified as being important to your identity.
- Understand that the negative experiences in your life have offered knowledge. For example, if you have had negative experiences with romance, learn from those experiences. What have they taught you about the kind of person you want to be?



News for the week:

Next week is bus safety week, Red Ribbon Week and also we are stressing anti-bullying. All of these important areas will be highlighted, but we can actually stress these ideas every day.

I want to thank Mr. Treat, Mrs. Chaney and EAST students for putting together a coloring book to be given out to younger students during training Mr. Williams will provide on bus safety. Students and staff working together on projects such as the coloring books represent some of my favorite activities.

October is Principal's month in Arkansas. We have been fortunate to have such consistency in our principal leadership. Let's all give a shout out to Mrs. Hopkins, Mr. Fisher and Mr. Williams. I can promise everyone that there are many things they do for us and our students that go unseen. Please tell them how much you appreciate their hard work. They take the brunt of negativity and shield the rest of us from that in order for the rest of us to stay positive about our work. I am thankful for each principal.

Mrs. McFerron and the Pleasant View Bucket-Drummers!



The photo below shows some boards John Moody put together for Occupational Therapy. They look like so much fun and the kinesthetic activity will be fun for the students. Thanks Mr. Moody!

Have a great day off tomorrow. Do something special for yourself!

