



Getting Out of Your Own Way: Being a Career Educator

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The Outline:

Introduction

What can we do to deal with a job that feels like too much so much of the time? What can we control?

B. Students

Look at each student with a fresh mind every day, despite their history or past relationship with you.

A. Teaching


How do you organize lesson for your classes? Tips to minimize stress & be more effective.

C. Colleagues

Take responsibility to create a positive, supportive environment with your fellow workers.

D. Self

Small ways to disconnect and refresh yourself for another day (or hour).



Ever feel like the job is running you instead of the other way around?
Me, too.
Most of the time you can improve this feeling by getting out of your own way.

“It’s Alright”
Jon Batiste



Introduction

"Your living is determined not so much by what life brings to you as by the *attitude* you bring to life; not so much by what happens to you as by *the way your mind looks at what happens.*"

Khalil Gibran



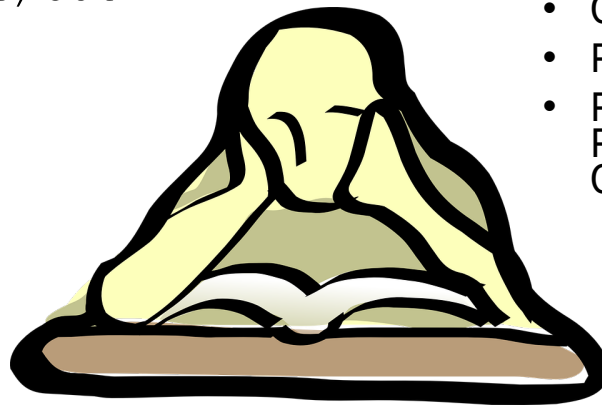
Where I'm Coming From

Background

- 40+ years of teaching
 - Four Mid-West states
 - Pre-K through adult
 - Music-based (mostly)
- Almost burned out 2-3 times, but persevered.

Education/Training

- BME, MME, PhD.
- Started in-service training or graduate hours for pedagogy and student behaviors in the 1980s. A partial list below:
 - William Glasser, Reality Therapy
 - Steven Covey, Habits
 - Love and Logic
 - Cooperative Learning
 - PBIS
 - Philosophers/Researchers such as Dewey, Piaget, Bruner, Tyler, Boardman, Duke, Creswell, Madsen, Reimer, Elliott, etc.



I LOVE to come to campus to be with the students, faculty, & staff, even after 40+ years!

My aim is just to share the synthesis of what I've learned during my career. My approach in the four areas we will cover have worked for me to keep energized past the rough years and avoid burn out. I do not profess to be any kind of expert or to tell you what you should do.

However, if you can relate to, be reminded of, be refreshed by, or see something through a new lens, then my job here is done.

Let's see where you all are today. . .

How are you feeling today about the content you are teaching this semester?

A Great! I'm ready to go.

B Pretty good. I'm getting there.

C Feeling a bit overwhelmed but okay.

D Not sure how I'm going to get it done.

Which of these do you feel is your "weakest link"?

A Teaching

B The students

C My colleagues

D Issues with self

A. Teaching

Some thoughts:

1. How do you prepare to teach?
2. Is your teaching flexible?
3. Do students have input on assignments?
4. How's your organization?

"Higher Ground" Stevie Wonder



Be in a constant state of self-reflection with your teaching.

A. Teaching

Preparation

- EVERY class gets prep attention before I walk in the room to teach
 - Rarely a “let-me-pull-the-week-2,-day-1 lesson-plan-and-go” approach
 - Follow the syllabus, but **reconstruct** each lesson to fit the students this semester AND bring in something fresh for you (and them)
 - This is SO worth the effort and is usually complete in 5-10 minutes.

Flexibility

- Class not going well? Alter it.
- Key people absent? Adjust.
- Class seems down? Talk and find out why or just pitch the plan and do something fun or less stressful
 - If students feel overloaded, delay a due date, cancel an assignment for a grade, streamline a project. It’s okay.

You cannot force students to learn your subject matter.
They have to WANT to and sometimes that means you have to back off.

A. Teaching

Student Input

- Do you ever get student input on what their assignments should be (outside of required pieces)?
 - This could look at least two ways:
 - Choices within the assignment
 - Two topics for an essay
 - Different subject choices to analyze.
 - Post-class survey on what assignments they felt they learned the most and which didn't seem be worth their efforts
 - From there you can decide on alterations for the next time the class is offered.

Iconic comment for this page:
"You are teaching people, not the curriculum". Th curriculum really does come second.

Organization

- How do you keep track of your students?
 - Is your syllabus crystal clear about attendance? How roll is taken?
 - Do they know how their grades will be averaged at semester?
 - Do you keep a meeting log/email file on your correspondence with students?
 - Do you inquire about them (and use NW 360) when you are not getting work in, or they are not attending?
- The better I am at these things, the smoother that class goes during the semester. There are fewer misunderstandings and angst on my part and theirs.



A. Teaching Questions or Comments

B. Students

1. Putting on that “teacher” role
2. Building relationships
3. Dealing with the difficult ones

It's not WHAT you say, but HOW you say it.



“Closer to Fine” Brandi & Catherine Carlile



B. Students

Students will not learn from you if they do not like and/or respect you.
Not even adult students.

Teacher Role

- Be professional to all students
 - No sarcasm, scolding, or chiding for any reason
- Be friendly, but do not be a friend
- See each student as your favorite
- Do NOT take on responsibility for each students' learning.

Relationships

- Regardless of yesterday, last week, or last month, each student gets a fresh start every time you see them. This sets the groundwork for a good teacher/student relationship
 - It does not mean you forget the past or allow students to take advantage of you

Difficult Ones

- Keep the difficulty private
- Document your interactions
- Seek help for the student or for you if needed.
- Follow everything in the first two columns.
- Discuss solutions with a trusted colleague privately



B. Students Questions or Comments

C. Colleagues

1. Professional admiration
2. Cooperation
3. Dealing with difficulties

"Work It Out" Jurassic 5, Dave Matthews



"The strength of the team is each individual member.
The strength of each member is the team."
Phil Jackson

C. Colleagues

Look around you. You are probably working with some amazing people. You may have even gotten to help hire some of these people. Do not forget how fortunate you are to be in this position and tell the colleagues you admire just how much and why you admire them.



C. Colleagues

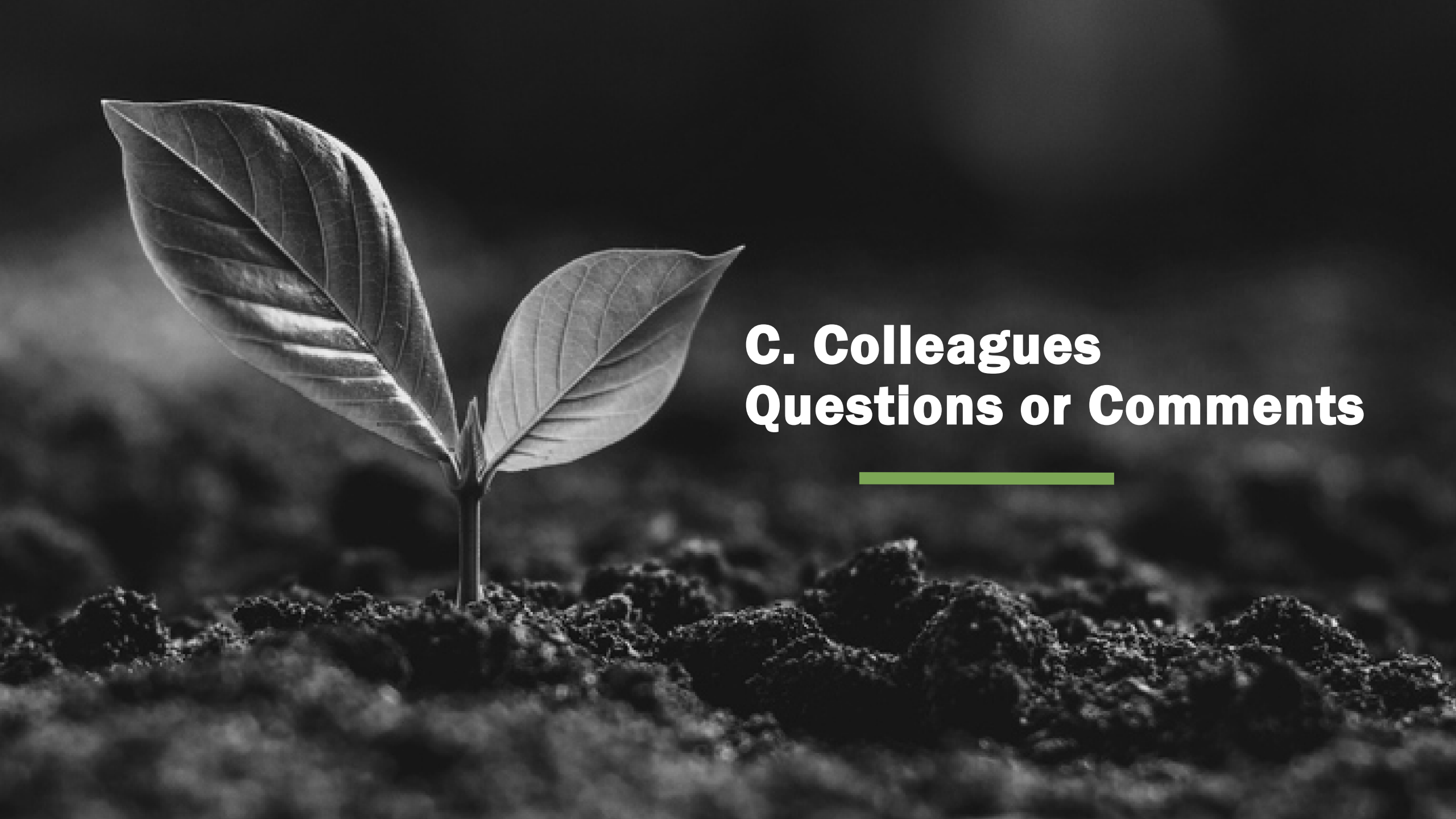
Even if you do not agree on everything,
your colleagues are your team.
Support them and they will support you.

Cooperation

- The key to cooperation is the same as building relationships with students: *each person gets a fresh start every time you see them.*
 - even if their comments in faculty meeting upset you
 - even if their philosophies are different from yours
 - even if they snubbed you at A&G
- You must be humble, but solid within yourself to get along in an academic atmosphere. You are not better or worse than any other faculty or staff member on campus, so do not give off either vibe.

Difficulties

- Keep it as private as you can.
- Try to talk using the cooperation attitude
 - Attempt to understand their position
- If you cannot come to a resolution, continue the cooperation attitude anyway.
 - Do not contribute negatively and escalate a difficulty or disagreement if it's unsolvable at that moment
 - Sometimes time and patience will do wonders



C. Colleagues Questions or Comments

D. Self

1. Body
2. Mind
3. Spirit

“I now see how owning our story and loving ourselves through that process is the bravest thing that we will ever do.” Brené Brown

“Rainbow” Kasey Musgraves



D. Self

“Self-love, my liege, is not so vile a sin, as self-neglecting.”
William Shakespeare

Body

- Get your sleep
- Eat as healthy as you can
- Move
 - I am always working on these three but when they are in place, I feel so good.

Mind

- Monitor your “self talk”
 - Speak kindly to yourself
- Know who you are
 - Strengths & weaknesses
 - Set goals to improve
 - Use your strengths for good
- Seek out good company
 - Avoid people toxic to you
- Keep learning
 - If we don’t, we are not the examples our students deserve

Spirit

- Whatever is spirit to you, nourish it daily
- Generic ways that work for me:
 - Listen to music
 - Undisturbed quiet
 - Play piano
 - Walk my dog
- If you need a refresh during the school day, schedule it like a meeting and hold to it no matter what.
 - You are worth it.



5. Self Questions or Comments



DO
WHAT
YOU
LOVE

LOVE
WHAT
YOU
DO

Most of all:

Choose joy, choose positivity, choose to be 100% present everyday. It is all about your attitude and choices in life. It may take practice, but you really do control that aspect of your life.



Spotify list of
positive-energy songs

“Waiting on the World to Change”
John Mayer



Thank you

I appreciate that you chose this presentation today. Have a wonderful spring semester.

Debbie Brown

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