

Good morning! We hope that you had a fantastic break and your first week back went smoothly!



Often, we don't have time during the school year to read much of anything other than educational articles, books, etc. So when we are able to fit in a good book, it is a treat. I recently finished a book called, *Chasing Better*, by Corey Baker. Subtitle of... *Awakening the person you've always longed to be*. Just the title alone caught my eye enough to purchase it and read it. I am the type of person that if I buy it, I read it to its entirety whether I liked it or not because I spent money on it. Quite frankly, I have only regretted buying one book in my life and that was an Oprah Book Club Book. I got caught up in the hype of it and I disliked every chapter, but I read it, but felt I just wasted all this time and money on a poor book in my opinion. "Chasing Better" was not a waste of my time.

Regardless of our age, we are always learning. Oh yes, lets back up to age, so last year a student asked me who the oldest teacher was at the middle school, and I replied to her that I did not have any idea. Of course after I thought about it, I realized, I was the oldest teacher at the middle school. If that does not make you take a step back, I don't know what will. Then to add salt to the wound, my YOUNGER teaching partner (whom is retiring), my friend, said to me the other day... "I was talking to someone about the retirements this year and after this big group goes, there are a new five

teachers that are the oldest in the district.” I laughed and asked her who they were and she said, “You are in the top five!” HUMM! It is a good thing that we are good friends, because I may have ... well never mind what I may have done. Those of you who know me, can fill in the blanks. So we can look at this in two ways, be depressed, or celebrate! I am chose to celebrate after I cried a little. HA!

This is why I read books like *Chasing Better* ! I feel we should never stop trying to better ourselves, or learning something new, or experiencing new things. And because this book has many profound thoughts I will share only a few today and possibly more in the future or this article would be a chapter.



FEAR

“From the very beginning of our lives, we have been taught and conditioned to be cautious.” We were taught to not to touch things it may be hot, not to do things as we may get hurt, and as a parent, we tend to teach the same to our children. We teach about all the things not to do. We are teaching or have been taught to be cautious. Although when kids are younger they tend to have less fear, such as when we compare a kindergarten class vs a 7th grade class. What do we see besides some similarities of behavior (ha), we see the kindergarten children being free to express themselves in interacting with their peers, when drawing, they have no boundaries, when using crayons, their art work is often colorful, they make friends easily. Then we go to the 7th grade kids, what do we see? Trying to fit it so they don’t embarrass themselves, they are often stifling their personalities, they use less color, they have more difficulties with interactions, and finding true friends is a feat. WHY? LEARNED FEAR!

Fear stifles us! Whether it is fear of heights, or fear of trying new things, or fear of what others think, we all have fears because we have learned to be paralyzed by our thoughts. So how can we get better at fear? One step at a time and to stop thinking of it as a weakness. We should take that first small step toward that fear and challenge it. Look at it as if no one is watching and if we fall, we get right back up and no one saw this but you! However, I don't about you, but when I have literally fallen to the ground, the first thing I do is look to see if anyone is watching! Right? We don't want to embarrassed. FEAR! That is a natural instinct.

We also have to look at what fear does to our lives? It holds us back and it keeps us from doing things. No doubt most of us could say that it has stifled our lives to some extent. Small steps... we need to challenge that fear. If for instance we were afraid to present in front of our peers, we can still have fears, but we decide to conquer some of those fears by starting small, speak to a small group of peers, then move to a larger group and present, until we work up to where we want to be. Would we still be scared? Yes, but we are chipping away at our fears one step at a time.

Love this quote...“We have to desire to win more than you desire not to lose.” We have to desire to name that fear and go after it. We are desiring better for ourselves!

Have a fantastic week!



Belinda and Linda
RLSD Mentoring Program