

## How To Not Quit Teaching

May 4, 2019 by Michael Linsin

Four of every ten new teachers leave the profession within five years.

That is a staggering number.

It's made all the more alarming given that teacher shortages in the US are expected to exceed 300,000 by 2020.

Although low starting pay, [large class sizes](#), and lack of autonomy are certainly factors . . .

Most of the reasons for dissatisfaction are within the teacher's control.

That isn't to say that it's their fault.

Teacher ed. programs do a terrible job preparing teachers for the realities of the classroom, and individual schools and districts aren't much better.

But with the right knowledge and commitment, *anyone* can have a long and happy career.

Here's how:

### **1. Be an expert in classroom management.**

This is by far the most important thing you can do to begin enjoying your job. When students are well-behaved and attentive, *everything* is easier.

Your confidence soars, your stress plummets, and the work becomes deeply satisfying – despite the craziness and politics outside your classroom walls.

Student time on task increases dramatically and even test scores are positively affected.

Here at SCM, we're dedicated to providing the clearest and simplest approach to creating a classroom your students love being part of and you love teaching – no matter where you work or who shows up on your roster.

Becoming an expert in this one area will allow you to float above the fray and avoid the stress and burnout that effect so many.

When you get a chance, please check out our books and guides as well as over 500 articles in our archive that explain the strategies you need to thrive in even the toughest schools.

## **2. Say no.**

It can be hard to say no, especially if you're a new teacher eager to please. But politely declining committees or after-school programs you're not required to join can save mountains of time and actually garner you more respect.

Saying no to gossiping colleagues, students who want to hang out during recess, and parents who want to discuss their child's progress every other day can be especially liberating.

It can afford you the time you need to think, take breaks, or just sit and breathe.

You can also say no to doing for students [what they can do for themselves](#) – which is far more than most teachers realize – and to kneeling down to reteach what you taught just minutes before.

By focusing on your core responsibilities, which mainly consist of presenting excellent lessons and [setting students up for success](#), you become much more efficient and effective.

You're also able to leave work at a decent hour, which is key to number 3.

### 3. Take care of yourself.

According to the American Federation of Teachers, 61 percent of teachers say their work is always or often stressful. Other studies indicate even higher numbers, as many as 93 percent.

This underscores the importance of not only becoming an expert in classroom management and learning to say no, but of taking care of yourself and seeing to your personal life.

You must get away from even thinking about teaching for several hours each day and limit, if not downright eliminate, any weekend catch-up work.

Eat a whole-foods diet and exercise at least three days a week to improve energy and relieve residual stress. Stretching, breathing, and meditation can also be effective. Adequate sleep, of course, does wonders.

Spend quality time with friends and family or on hobbies and interests outside of education. Laugh and enjoy your life. Make *this* your focus.

Teachers who view their profession as just one part of their life are happier and more effective than those who get sucked into a culture of obsession.

#### **Fight Back**

You don't have to be a martyr who sacrifices health and happiness for your students, parents, principal, school, society, or anyone else.

You don't have to work your fingers to the bone, [stay late after school](#), or be frustrated with every new change in policy and curriculum or yet another responsibility thrown onto your plate.

You don't have to endure daily misbehavior and disrespect.

It's a myth that has become an institutional habit that you have to concern yourself with things out of your control, perpetuated by miserable teachers

and controlling administrators who want to keep everyone else down in the muck or under their thumb.

But you do have to fight back.

You do have to be determined. You do have to shrewdly and unapologetically do what is best for your students, your career, and your long-term health and family.

Here at SCM, we've heard from thousands of teachers who have transformed their lives and careers using our approach.

**It's doable for anyone.**

For more on how to eliminate stress and become more efficient so you can spend fewer hours at work, check out [\*The Happy Teacher Habits\*](#).